MINNESOTA HORSEMEN'S BENEVOLENT & PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION, INC.

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Chair Klein and Members of the Senate Commerce Committee,

The Minnesota Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association (HBPA) strongly supports SF 4139. We appreciate Chair Klein and Senator Frentz for bringing this important legislation forward.

Thoroughbred racing in Minnesota is at a critical crossroads. As additional forms of gambling have been legalized, competition for gaming dollars has intensified. In states that allow racetracks to enhance purses through sports betting and other gaming revenues, the industry is thriving. In states where racetracks are excluded from these revenues, tracks are closing at an alarming rate.

Horse racing is unique because owners can easily relocate their horses to states offering higher purses. Canterbury Park is a remarkable racetrack. Canterbury staff and the HBPA have created the most welcoming and family-friendly stable area in the country, with incredible programs such as Furlong Learning, Abijah's on the Backside, and the Canterbury Chaplaincy. These efforts have built strong loyalty among our horsemen and horsewomen that has kept them coming back year after year. However, as the purse imbalance between Minnesota and other states continues to grow, it is becoming increasingly difficult for owners and backside workers to keep returning to Minnesota, as the gap makes it harder for owners to justify sending their horses to Canterbury instead of tracks where it is at least possible to break even.

If Canterbury is no longer able to sustain thoroughbred racing, the entire economy of the backside will go with it. This includes jobs for backside workers, demand for agricultural commodities such as feed, and other equine services such as veterinary care.

We want to be clear: the challenges facing horseracing at Canterbury are not due to poor management or declining interest in the sport. They stem entirely from an uneven playing field among states. Given a level playing field, we firmly believe Canterbury Park would rank among the most successful thoroughbred tracks in the country. The revenue from SF 4139 will help correct this imbalance and secure a strong future for Minnesota's thoroughbred industry.

The HBPA urges the Committee to support SF 4139.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Justin Revak, President