



April 13, 2026

The Honorable Representatives Jim Nash and Ginny Klevorn
State Government Finance and Policy Committee
State Capitol
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Co-Chairs Nash and Klevorn, Co-Vice Chairs Bahner and Davis, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Shakopee Chamber & Visitors Bureau to express support for HF4912, legislation that would direct a portion of existing electronic pull-tab revenue to the Minnesota Racing Commission to support the Minnesota-bred Thoroughbred industry.

Canterbury Park, located in Shakopee, is one of the most-visited entertainment destinations in the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area. According to Placer.ai visitor analytics, Canterbury Park recorded 1.1 million visits in 2025 — a 31.9 percent increase over the prior year — with 418,300 unique visitors spending an average of more than three hours per visit. Canterbury Park visitors reflect strong consumer purchasing power: their median household income is \$102,300, above the statewide median of \$95,600, and 48.8 percent hold a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 38.8 percent of Minnesota households. These are visitors who also patronize restaurants, hotels, retailers, and other businesses in Shakopee, Scott County, and the surrounding region during their time here.

Canterbury Park is also a significant year-round employer in our community. According to the company's most recent annual report, Canterbury Park employs 214 full-time and 532 part-time team members, with approximately 350 additional seasonal employees hired during the live horse racing season from May through September.

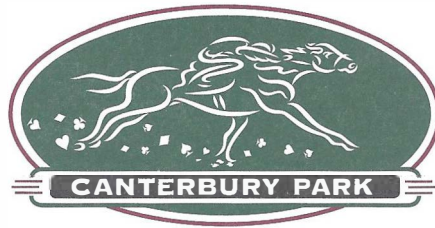
The vitality of live Thoroughbred racing at Canterbury Park depends on a healthy Minnesota-bred racing and breeding ecosystem. Competitive purses for Minnesota-bred races are essential to sustaining breeder and owner investment in the state, which directly supports the quality of Canterbury Park's live racing season — a key driver of summer tourism for Shakopee and the broader region. HF4912 is a targeted investment in that ecosystem, using existing revenue without creating a new tax burden.

The Shakopee Chamber & Visitors Bureau urges the committee to advance HF4912. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tim Zunker", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Tim Zunker
President



Chair Nash and Chair Klevorn
G23 Minnesota State Capitol
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Re: HF4912, Witte: Electronic pull-tab revenue dedicated for support of the Minnesota-bred thoroughbred industry, and money appropriated.

Dear Chair Nash, Chair Klevorn, and members of the State Government Finance and Policy Committee,

Thank you for taking the time to hear HF4912, a bill that provides critical, targeted financial support to Minnesota's thoroughbred racing industry at a time when the industry is facing significant financial strain. Canterbury Park is proud to serve as one of Minnesota's two licensed racetracks and the only racetrack in Minnesota with thoroughbred racing. Racing at Canterbury Park supports jobs across the state from trainers, breeders, and jockeys to veterinarians, feed suppliers, and hospitality workers.

HF4912 would provide a substantial and meaningful investment in the thoroughbred industry by allocating \$2,000,000 of the revenue deposited in the general fund from electronic pull-tabs to the Minnesota Racing Commission to supplement purses for races held exclusively for Minnesota-bred thoroughbreds and to provide grants, loans, and financial incentives to breeders and owners, in order to promote, encourage, and support the Minnesota-bred thoroughbred industry and encourage breeding and racing of thoroughbreds. The future of thoroughbred racing at Canterbury Park depends on a stable financial foundation, and purse support is central to that stability.

We focus on purse levels because:

- Higher purse levels attract more and better horses.
- Higher purse levels attract more interest from customers, both from inside and outside Minnesota.
- Higher purse levels result in more investment in feed, training, veterinary care, and hundreds of millions of dollars in economic activity and the jobs associated with the horse industry.

Other states have stepped up to protect their horse industries using new gaming revenue. In past years, the Minnesota Legislature has reviewed the market forces affecting horse racing and taken steps to support purses, including legalizing card rooms, and authorizing advanced-deposit wagering. In states where sports betting has been legalized, racetracks have gained access to new revenue streams to stabilize purse levels, strengthen racing operations, and support the industry long-term. HF4912 helps address immediate needs, but sports betting remains the most impactful long-term policy solution for ensuring that live racing can continue in Minnesota.

The racing industry has been under increasing pressure in recent years, and without action, the long-term sustainability of thoroughbred racing in Minnesota is at risk. HF4912 provides a meaningful, reliable source of support that will help stabilize the industry and preserve the jobs, economic activity, and community benefits that thoroughbred racing brings to our Minnesota.

Sincerely,

Randy Sampson, CEO, Canterbury Park

ENHANCING RACING PURSES

How to Revitalize Minnesota's Horse Industry

Traditionally, horse racing purses - the revenues generated by parimutuel wagering by horse racing fans - have been the primary source of revenue to support a successful horse industry in states across the country.

In recent years, the significant expansion of both legal and illegal gaming has shifted the landscape and created economic disparities that are threatening the economic benefits created by a strong horse industry.

Horse racing purses provide the prize money that horses earn from competing in a race. Once awarded, purses are split between the owners, trainers, and jockeys.

Most horse training and care costs are fixed regardless of the purse level at the racetrack where the horse competes. For this reason, racetracks offering larger purses attract more owners and higher quality horses. That, in turn, attracts more fans and wagering interest leading to additional dollars from bettors that help support purses in an ongoing cycle.

Purse sizes impact more than just racing in Minnesota. These funds also provide incentives to breed and raise horses in our state as there are Breeder's funds that are only allocated to the Minnesota-bred horses in each race. Attracting owners and breeders to our state contributes to the economic impact of Minnesota's horse industry by supporting thousands of jobs at the racetracks and local farms as well as the agricultural industry for feed and hay and many other professions such as veterinarians and farriers.



★ States Are Stepping Up To Increase Racing Purses ★

The funding for racing purses traditionally comes from wagering revenue and race entry fees. As recruiting top jockey talent and horses becomes more competitive, tracks without competitive purse levels are negatively impacted. Since 2000, 21 Thoroughbred tracks have closed in states that have failed to adapt including iconic tracks such as Arlington Park, Hollywood Park, Hialeah Racecourse, Suffolk Downs, and Golden Gate Fields.

Minnesota is not protected from this threat, as racetracks that are forced to depend primarily on traditional horse race wagering revenues are challenged to effectively compete against the many options for gaming. On the other hand, states that have authorized additional gaming options and/or purse supplements to their licensed racetracks have helped horse racing continue to offer competitive purses, which supports the workers, farmers, and small businesses that depend on a successful horse industry.

How States Are Taking Action To Support Purses

Examples of important gains made with enhanced state support and gaming options include:



In 2024, the **New Jersey** legislature unanimously supported the extension of a \$20 million annual purse enhancement for horse racing in the state.



Overnight purses in **Florida** rose 36% from the 2022-2023 to the 2023-2024 season thanks to a purse enhancement from the state of Florida administered through the Florida-Bred Incentive Fund—FTBOA. In addition to direct state purse supplements, Florida also supports racing purses through electronic gaming.



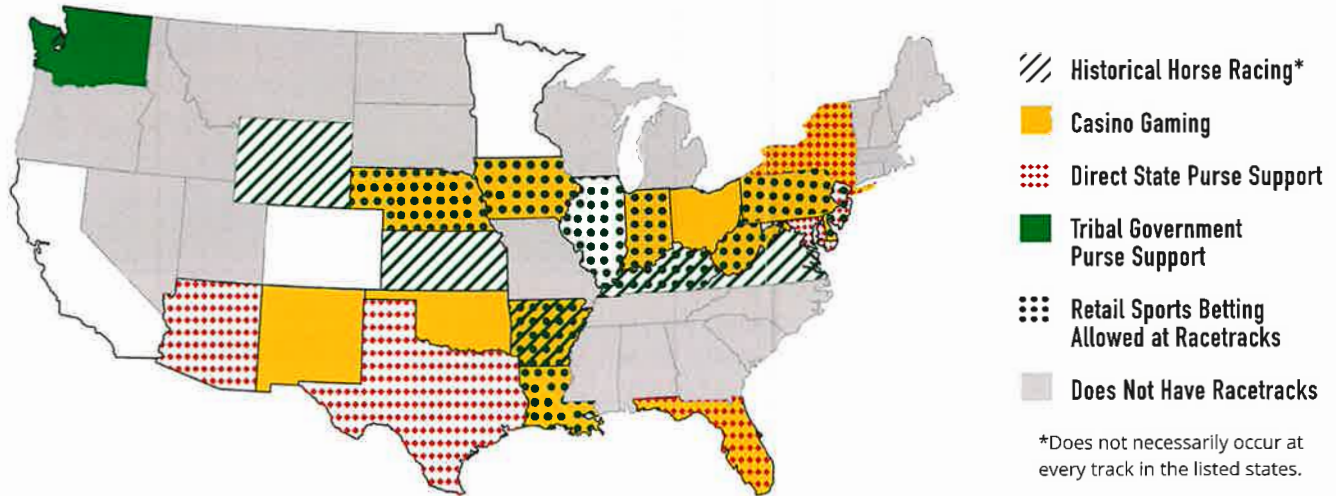
Kentucky, long viewed as the leader in the racing industry, has seen total purses more than double since 2018 with the popularity of Historical Horse Racing machines at Kentucky racetracks.



In 2019, the **Texas** Legislature passed a law that diverts state sales taxes paid by the horse industry to supplement racing purses.



★ Racing States Utilizing Purse-Enhancing Strategies to Support Racetracks ★



States with parimutuel wagering at horse racetracks (excluding bush and fair races) include: AZ, AR, CA, CO, DE, FL, IL, IN, IA, KY, LA, MD, MN, NE, NJ, NM, NY, OH, OK, PA, TX, WA, WV, WY. In 2000, Minnesota authorized Card Casinos at racetracks. Note: Some states utilize multiple strategies to support racing purses.

Minnesota's Past Support for Live Racing and Horse Racing Purses

Three different times, state action has been taken to establish or increase racing purses.

- **1982:** Minnesota voters approved parimutuel wagering on horse racing. Shortly after, the Legislature adopted the laws needed to regulate live racing and wagering, giving horse racing in Minnesota its start.
- **2000:** The Minnesota Legislature approved card games for racetracks and the Canterbury Card Casino opened. This increased the total purses paid in the 2000 live racing season by 26.6% over the previous year.
- **2012-2022:** A ten-year joint marketing and purse enhancement agreement between Canterbury Park and the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community increased daily purses and attracted more horses for the annual live racing meet. At its peak, the agreement allowed Canterbury Park to double its racing purses.

★ Support Minnesota's Horse Industry: The Time For Action Is Now! ★

The rapid expansion of casino gaming and sports betting technology continues to change the gaming landscape, putting competitive pressure on the racing industry.

With the decline in purses at Canterbury Park and uncertainty around the future purse levels, **Minnesota's thoroughbred mare and foal count has fallen 53% since 2019**, meaning owners and breeders are finding the state-bred incentives and purses more desirable in other states. **This decline impacts all facets of the horse industry, not just racing.** Neighboring states, such as Nebraska and Iowa, which are competing with Minnesota for horses, are adapting to the changing landscape and finding ways to enhance racing purses and make their tracks into preferred destinations.

As sports betting and other gaming modernization conversations occur at the Capitol, a successful solution should reflect the belief of the majority of Minnesotans who support gaming and entertainment that benefit the horse industry, tribal communities and local charities. **As state lawmakers consider changes to the scope of legalized gaming, the horse industry should benefit.** Canterbury Park stands ready to collaborate with lawmakers, tribal leaders, and charities to meet the local needs that gaming supports.