



Texas HORSE Today

March 7, 2011

Texas H.O.R.S.E., a multi-discipline organization that includes the National Cutting Horse Association, announced its enthusiastic support for a constitutional amendment and implementing legislation filed on March 3 in the Texas Senate by Sen. Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa - SJR 33 and SB 1118, and in the Texas House of Representatives by Representative Beverly Woolley - HJR 111 and HB 2111. Senator Jeff Wentworth is listed as a co-author of the bills filed in the Senate.

If approved by the legislature, the constitutional amendment will be voted on by the citizens of Texas on November 8, 2011. Following its approval at the polls, the amendment will authorize video lottery gaming (also referred to as slot machines) at the 13 licensed horse and greyhound racetracks in Texas, and provide that the 3 federally recognized Indian tribes in Texas are not prohibited from operating video lottery machines on their tribal lands. The implementing bill filed today will define the administration and regulation of video lottery gaming when the constitutional amendment becomes effective.

The legislation will pave the way for an industry that will generate hundreds of millions of dollars in taxes annually for Texas. Just as importantly, it will provide the tools to allow the Texas racing industry to compete on a level playing field with all the states bordering Texas, whose respective governments all gave their racing industries the support and mechanisms with which to effectively devastate the industry in Texas during the last decade. Additionally, this legislation reaches out and provides much needed support to the non-racing segments of the horse industry, establishing a Performance Horse Development Fund, and Texas will be unique in that regard. This means that the benefits of this legislation can potentially impact all 254 counties in Texas, down to the local rodeos and other local horse events.

This legislation is extremely important to the National Cutting Horse Association because of its provisions to establish this Performance Horse Development Fund (PHDF). A portion of the PHDF is designated to be administered by the NCHA, a prominent national organization with its headquarters in the State of Texas. The PHDF would provide a revenue stream that would be a significant catalyst for cutting horse activity all across the state, with the ability to positively impact the NCHA's Triple Crown events, smaller limited age events and weekend shows. Additionally, the NCHA could utilize funding for youth scholarships, and promotion of the sport of cutting to the general public. In 2010 the NCHA conducted over 530 events in Texas in 24 towns and communities, from Abilene to Gainesville, Sulphur Springs, Sweetwater and Yoakum just to name a few. These cutting events (and the breeding and training of cutting horses) generate hundreds of millions of dollars in economic activity for the state, create millions of dollars in tax revenues, drive tourism to Texas, and provide thousands of jobs for Texans among a wide variety of employment activities.

In addition to providing substantial tax revenues to Texas, the ultimate benefit of passage of this legislation will be to help revitalize the enormous equine agricultural industry in our state, resulting in many thousands of additional jobs and hundreds of millions of dollar in economic impact annually. Texas has always been looked to as the “home of the horse”; it is part of our heritage. This legislation will go a long way toward giving the Texas horse industry what it needs to regain its rightful status as the best in the nation.

To learn more about this legislation and how it will benefit you – go to www.texashorseweb.com

Texas Horse Organizations for Racing, Showing, and Eventing (H.O.R.S.E.) was founded in 2008 to unite, for the first time, all the major horse organizations in Texas. Its members include:

- American Paint Horse Association
- American Quarter Horse Association
- National Cutting Horse Association
- Texas Thoroughbred Association
- Texas Quarter Horse Association
- Texas Arabian Breeders Association
- Texas Horsemen’s Partnership
- Texas Paint Horse Breeders Association.

Please contact your Senator and Representative today and encourage them to support this legislation. If you are not sure who those elected officials are, go to http://texashorseweb.com/?page_id=218 You can write them, email them, fax them a letter, or choose the easiest of all and just pick up a phone and call their office. Just ask the staff member who answers their phone to please let the Senator or Representative know you called asking him (or her) to support (Bill #s -SB 1118 and HB 2111), which will allow video lottery machines (also called slot machines) at racetracks.