

Why Horse Racing and Casinos = Bad Business for Georgia



FINANCIAL RED FLAGS:

Since 2000, **41 racetracks in the U.S. have permanently closed (26 of those within the last 10 years); in contrast, only 2 racetracks with casinos have opened.** Horse racing is an industry in decline with a shrinking customer base and is no longer a self-sustaining business. According to Statista (2022), the market value of horse racing has dropped 33% over the past 10 Years.

To keep horse racing profitable, the majority of states with racetracks **direct subsidies totaling approximately \$1 billion.** Most existing racetracks are coupled with casinos (aka, racinos) and are dependent upon a cut of casino revenue.

Gambling places additional burdens on already-strained mental health services and law enforcement to deal with associated addiction and crime. Casinos are a favored location for human (sex) trafficking, thus creating a grave public safety issue for victims, employees, and patrons.

The promise of jobs for Georgians will be low paying and low skill jobs. High paying jobs go to personnel that travel state to state with their horses (e.g., trainers, jockeys).

Discarded racehorses are a hefty burden for taxpayers and charitable donors. **The horse racing industry breeds approximately twice as many foals than are needed, and those that race retire after 3-4 years, creating an enormous surplus of unwanted horses requiring 20-30 years of lifetime care.** The cost of aftercare for a racehorse is typically thousands of dollars more per year than that for an average horse because of chronic medical issues.

The industry donates only a tiny fraction of its revenue for aftercare programs, which falls far short of the tens of millions of dollars needed, relying instead on charitable dollars for rescues, private adoptions, and auctioning excess horses to kill buyers for transport and subsequent slaughter in Mexico and Canada. According to an estimate by Jen Roytz, executive director of the Retired Racehorse Project, **the current number of Thoroughbred aftercare programs nationwide cannot accommodate half the horses that need rehoming** in an average year, even with full funding.

Given Georgia's robust state economy and commitment to public safety and mental health, Georgia does not need to assume the cost shift and risks inherent in the declining horse racing industry and associated gambling.