

ASSEMBLY TOURISM, GAMING AND THE ARTS
COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 2256

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: DECEMBER 6, 2021

The Assembly Tourism, Gaming and the Arts Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 2256.

This bill prohibits a racetrack that qualified as a “racetrack” under N.J.S.A.5:12A-10 on June 11, 2018, and at which a standardbred horse race meeting was held within one year before that date, from holding a sports wagering license as former racetrack after the effective date of this bill. As a result, racetracks that currently or previously conducted live standardbred horse race meetings must continue to do so as a condition of operating a sports pool. The bill also requires those racetracks to schedule at least 151 live standardbred race meetings per year in order to be eligible to hold a sports wagering license after the effective date of this bill, but that number may be decreased to 75 or more race dates upon written consent from the Standardbred Breeders’ and Owners’ Association of New Jersey.

The Legislature recognizes the importance of the horse racing industry to this State, which includes generating millions of dollars in agribusiness and tax revenue, thousands of jobs, and support for thousands of acres of productive agricultural open space. This bill seeks to protect this industry and the benefits to the State of racing-related training and breeding farms by ensuring the continuation of live horse racing for racetracks that operate sports pools. The bill is limited to standardbred racetracks only, in recognition of the inherent incentive to continue live horse racing that exists when a horsemen’s association operates the racetrack, as is currently the case with thoroughbred racetracks.

A similar statutory requirement to conduct live horse racing was enacted when the Legislature permitted racetracks to accept wagering on televised horse races, known as simulcasting. These measures ensure the continuation of live horse racing and its economic, agribusiness, and environmental benefits to the State.

Assembly Bill No. 2256 is identical to Senate Bill No. 3771 of 2020-2021.

This bill was pre-filed for introduction in the 2020-2021 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.