

ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 164

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JUNE 1, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman RONALD S. DANCER

District 12 (Burlington, Middlesex, Monmouth and Ocean)

SYNOPSIS

Supports Equine Science Center and Standardbred Breeders and Owners Association of New Jersey's proposal to phase in return of horse racing at Meadowlands Racetrack.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



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1 **AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION** supporting the Equine Science Center
2 at Rutgers University and the Standardbred Breeders and Owners
3 Association of New Jersey in their proposal to phase in the return
4 of horse racing at the Meadowlands Racetrack.
5
6 **WHEREAS**, Horse racing has been, and will continue to be, an integral
7 part of New Jersey’s history and economy; and
8 **WHEREAS**, Races have been held in the State since the 1600s and today
9 these events bring in nearly \$100 million of tax revenue annually;
10 and
11 **WHEREAS**, To help stop the spread of COVID-19, Executive Order No.
12 107 was issued by the Governor on March 21, 2020, which closed all
13 nonessential businesses across the State; and
14 **WHEREAS**, As a result of this order, racetracks, including their stabling
15 facilities and retail sports wagering lounges, were closed until further
16 notice; and
17 **WHEREAS**, In an effort to resume harness racing at the Meadowlands
18 Racetrack, the Equine Science Center and the Standardbred Breeders
19 and Owners Association of New Jersey (SBOANJ) have unveiled a
20 proposed risk mitigation plan outlining new policies and procedures
21 to control the spread of the disease at the facility; and
22 **WHEREAS**, The proposal is based on existing protocols in place at
23 racetracks that are currently operating in North America, Sweden,
24 Australia, and New Zealand and embrace many of the principles
25 embraced by public health officials; and
26 **WHEREAS**, The public will be prohibited from entering the facility to
27 watch races, no food or beverages will be sold, the temperatures of
28 all personnel will be taken prior to entering the facility, and access to
29 the paddock will be limited to ensure safe social distancing; and
30 **WHEREAS**, Those permitted access to the paddock will be required to
31 wear a face mask, have his or her body temperature checked prior to
32 entry, be provided protective gloves and hand sanitizer, and be
33 assisted by pre-assigned “runners” to reduce the number of
34 individuals touching common surfaces; and
35 **WHEREAS**, Horses will have one empty stall between them, be grouped
36 according to trainer to limit co-mingling between stables, and must
37 proceed in the same direction when entering and exiting the stall
38 area; and
39 **WHEREAS**, Drivers are encouraged to arrive at the track already dressed
40 in their race colors and may use locker rooms provided there are only
41 two drivers in at one time and safe social distancing is observed; and
42 **WHEREAS**, Once a race has concluded, there will be no winner’s circle
43 presentation, stalls will be disinfected with bleach, handlers must
44 leave thirty minutes after the conclusion of a race unless tending to
45 horses, and equipment must be washed at home or in a pre-assigned
46 area; and
47 **WHEREAS**, The Equine Institute and SBOANJ believe that they are one
48 industry capable of being productive during these difficult times; and

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1 **WHEREAS**, The horse racing community has long recognized the
2 importance of safety as many of its members already understand how
3 to control the spread of other infectious diseases and illnesses; and
4 **WHEREAS**, The State's breeding industry has continued to conduct
5 business in the midst of the COVID-19 outbreak and there is reason
6 to believe horse racing can operate as well; and
7 **WHEREAS**, By resuming horse racing, jobs in the racing and gaming
8 industries can be preserved which will generate taxable economic
9 activity for the State; and
10 **WHEREAS**, Furthermore, with the limited number of horse races being
11 held worldwide, New Jersey would find itself in the unique position
12 to have its own horse races simulcast to millions across the globe and
13 available for wagers; now, therefore,

15 **BE IT RESOLVED** *by the General Assembly of the State of New*
16 *Jersey:*

18 1. This House stands in support of the Equine Science Center at
19 Rutgers University and the Standardbred Breeders and Owners
20 Association of New Jersey in their proposal to safely phase in the
21 return of horse racing at the Meadowlands Racetrack.

2. Duly authenticated copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State, shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly to the Governor, Commissioner of the Department of Health, and the Commissioners of the New Jersey Racing Commission.

STATEMENT

32 This resolution supports the Equine Science Center at Rutgers
33 University and the Standardbred Breeders and Owners Association
34 of New Jersey (SBOANJ) in their proposal to safely phase in the
35 return of horse racing at the Meadowlands Racetrack. The proposal
36 incorporates many of the principles embraced by public health
37 experts such as eliminating large crowds, restricting access to certain
38 areas, practicing safe social distancing, requiring the use of face
39 masks, and disinfecting common areas. Currently, racetracks remain
40 closed until further notice as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic
41 pursuant to Executive Order No. 107 issued by the Governor on
42 March 21, 2020.

During the present public health crisis, safely resuming horse racing at the Meadowlands will help protect jobs while generating taxable economic activity for the State.