

## Testimony for State and Federal Affairs Committee

Hello, my name is Cameron Roth. I am a resident of Lawrence, KS and I am the President of the Kansas Thoroughbred Association. I am also a Kansas horseman with equine operations in Douglas and Coffey Counties.

As we all know, this is not an issue regarding whether or not to have casino gaming in Kansas, as it's already here in the way of multiple Native American Casinos, one in Dodge City that opened in 2009, a new one in Mulvane and one coming online in Kansas City, Kansas on February 3<sup>rd</sup>. To me, this is great, as it has helped slow the flow of Kansas dollars going to out-of-state casinos. The existing Kansas casinos have also provided much needed local jobs and tax revenue for the state.

The most frustrating thing for me as a Kansas horseman is the fact that there has not been a casino operator willing to open up shop at a Kansas racetrack under the current law. The reason most cited is that the 40% tax burden the casino operators are required to pay to the State is too high to make opening financially feasible. The KTA's opinion is that the 22% tax burden called for in SB 241 is much more fair to the casino operator.

Meanwhile, millions of dollars have left Kansas for states with more lucrative racing programs. Please keep in mind that while these other casinos presently operating in Kansas have provided local jobs and tax revenue, it is the racetracks that possess the trickle-down dollars that flow all throughout the state to support Kansas agri-business. I will name a few agriculture-related businesses the horse and greyhound industries support. The hay and grain producers, the beef producers, veterinarians, farriers, ag equipment dealers, vehicle dealers, tire dealers, fuel sales and on and on and on. It is high time that action is taken by the legislators of Kansas to make it more feasible to re-open the Kansas racetracks and re-claim what has been lost to other states.

The Kansas Thoroughbred Association feels that SB 241 is the best option to do just that. Here is an abbreviated list of reasons why:

- 1) The percentage splits of casino revenue between the casino operator, the State of Kansas and the breed groups is much more consistent with the successful programs throughout the country. This is especially true when compared to other Bill options we have been presented, in which the percentages to the breed industries are approximately half of any other program in the United States.
- 2) Senate Bill 241 does not require the re-opening of the pari-mutual act while other Bill options presented would require that be done.
- 3) Legislative support – Senator Bob Marshall has worked diligently to promote SB 241 because he sees the importance of the horse and greyhound industries in Kansas. He feels he has enough support from his fellow senators to move SB 241 on through the legislative process. Based on the conversations I have had with multiple legislators, I feel confident in Senator Marshall's assessment of SB 241. We stand ready to help him push this Bill. I have yet to have feedback from legislators that gives me even slight confidence in the ability to pass any of the other Bill options the KTA has been presented.

To sum it up, if you read the first two paragraphs of SB 241 as well as other Bill options, you will see wording regarding "Kansas agricultural opportunity act" and "encouraging economic opportunity in rural Kansas through expansion of horse and greyhound ownership, breeding and investment". Please consider why it is important to stimulate Kansas agriculture and the racing industries that support it.