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Senate of Pennsylvania

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TO: All Senators
FROM: Senator Jane C. Orie 
SUBJECT: Update of Race Horse Industry Reform Act of 1981
DATE: July 29, 2011

I plan on introducing legislation to update and strengthen the Race Horse Industry Reform Act of 1981.

While we have adopted, reformed and expanded the gaming law, the law which regulates the industry with the connection to agriculture community has not been revised in decades. I believe we need to make sure the level of transparency, oversight and review of the horse racing industry is at the appropriate standard, in large part due to the financial support the industry is receiving directly and indirectly through the creation and expansion of gaming. (And saving the agriculture community associated with horse racing was the impetus for the original gaming law.)

I am still working on the specifics of the legislation, but the proposal will look to give the State Horse Racing and State Harness Racing Commissions:

- more regulatory authority;
- the ability to raise fees for applications/licenses to help fund the activities of the commissions (including background investigations);
- the express authority to act as a mediator in disputes between racetracks and horsemen's organizations;
- the ability to adopt fees for and improve drug testing requirements of horses: pre- and post-race and "out of competition" backside and off site testing;
- oversight of fees charged by racetracks for horse rehabilitation efforts and allow for matching grants to horse rescue organizations;
- authorization to enter into interstate compacts for licensing and sanctions; and
- assistance in the review and background investigations of the applications for racetrack licensees and horsemen's licensees by specifically authorizing the Attorney General's office to conduct the necessary work, which is a recommended change to the gaming law made by the Thirty-First Statewide Grand Jury, which investigated the establishment and issuance of gaming licenses.

Should you wish to co-sponsor this legislation please contact Monica Armstrong at 787-6538 or by email at marmstrong@pasen.gov.