

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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VETERANS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS

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STATE OF MAINE

SENATE

132ND LEGISLATURE

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" to S.P. 358, L.D. 793, "An Act to Modernize Gaming Revenue Allocations and Increase Efforts to Prevent Gambling Addiction"

Amend the bill by striking out the title and substituting the following:

'Resolve, to Establish the Working Group to Review and Update the Laws Governing Harness Racing'

Amend the bill by striking out everything after the title and inserting the following:

'Emergency preamble. Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

Whereas, the effective date for acts and resolves of the Legislature is likely to be in early October; and

Whereas, the report required by this legislation must be submitted by December 3, 2025; and

Whereas, the working group established by this legislation needs sufficient time in which to complete its work; and

Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore, be it

Sec. 1. Working group established. Resolved: That the Working Group to Review and Update the Laws Governing Harness Racing, referred to in this resolve as "the working group," is established.

Sec. 2. Working group membership. Resolved: That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, the working group consists of 12 members appointed as follows:

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1. Two members of the Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate, including a member from each of the 2 parties holding the largest number of seats in the Legislature, one of whom serves on the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs;

2. Two members of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House, including at least one member from each of the 2 parties holding the largest number of seats in the Legislature, one of whom serves on the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry;

3. One member of the State Harness Racing Commission, appointed by the President of the Senate;

4. One member representing a statewide association of horse owners, trainers and drivers, appointed by the President of the Senate;

5. One member representing a statewide organization of Standardbred breeders, appointed by the President of the Senate;

6. One member representing licensed commercial tracks, appointed by the President of the Senate;

7. One member representing licensed off-track betting facilities, appointed by the Speaker of the House;

8. One member representing agricultural fairs that conduct pari-mutuel wagering, appointed by the Speaker of the House;

9. One member who is a veteran of the United States Armed Forces, appointed by the Speaker of the House; and

10. One member of the public with experience in hospitality, tourism or advertising, appointed by the Speaker of the House.

Sec. 3. Chairs. Resolved: That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, the Senate member who serves on the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs is the Senate chair and the House of Representatives member who serves on the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry is the House chair of the working group.

Sec. 4. Appointments; convening of working group. Resolved: That all appointments must be made no later than 30 days following the effective date of this resolve. The appointing authorities shall notify the Executive Director of the Legislative Council once all appointments have been completed. After appointment of all members, the chairs shall call and convene the first meeting of the working group. If 30 days or more after the effective date of this resolve a majority of but not all appointments have been made, the chairs may request authority and the Legislative Council may grant authority for the working group to meet and conduct its business.

Sec. 5. Duties. Resolved: That the working group shall review the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 8, chapter 11 and prepare a partial or complete revision of that chapter and any other sections of law reasonably related to harness racing in the State as may be necessary to modernize and sustain the sport of harness racing and to provide support for gambling addiction. The working group shall evaluate, but is not limited to evaluating, the following:

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1. The availability of suitable facilities to conduct harness racing and how to encourage development or preservation of those facilities;

2. Strategies to create a predictable annual schedule of races while maintaining the quality of racing and promoting the health and safety of animal and human participants in the sport;

3. Streamlining rules governing the licensing process and reducing complexity of those rules;

4. The economic impact of the sport and the allocation of existing resources; and

5. Successful models for the promotion or sustainment of racing as may exist in other jurisdictions.

Sec. 6. Staff assistance. Resolved: That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, the Legislative Council shall provide necessary staffing services to the working group, except that Legislative Council staff support is not authorized when the Legislature is in regular or special session.

Sec. 7. Report. Resolved: That, no later than December 3, 2025, the working group shall submit a report that includes its findings and recommendations, including suggested legislation, to the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs and the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. The Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs and the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry may each report out legislation related to the report to the Second Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature.

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved.'

Amend the bill by relettering or renumbering any nonconsecutive Part letter or section number to read consecutively.

SUMMARY

This amendment replaces the bill, which is a concept draft, with a resolve. The amendment establishes a working group to review the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 8, chapter 11, which governs harness racing, and prepare a partial or complete revision of that chapter and any other sections of law reasonably related to harness racing in the State as may be necessary to modernize and sustain the sport of harness racing and to provide support for gambling addiction. The working group is required to submit a report, including its findings and recommendations, and any suggested legislation, to the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs and the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, both of which are authorized to report out legislation related to the report to the Second Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature. The amendment includes an emergency preamble and emergency clause.

FISCAL NOTE REQUIRED

(See attached)



132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

LD 793

LR 1395(02)

An Act to Modernize Gaming Revenue Allocations and Increase Efforts to Prevent Gambling Addiction

Fiscal Note for Bill as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-376)

Committee: Veterans and Legal Affairs

Fiscal Note Required: Yes

Fiscal Note

Legislative Cost/Study

Legislative Cost/Study

The general operating expenses of this study are projected to be \$3,050 in fiscal year 2025-26. The Legislature's proposed budget for the 2026-2027 biennium includes \$22,196 in each of fiscal years 2025-26 and 2026-27 for the costs of legislative studies, as well as \$8,265 in projected balances from fiscal year 2024-25 and \$33,073 of balances carried over from prior years for this purpose. Whether these amounts are sufficient to fund all studies will depend on the number of studies authorized by the Legislative Council and the Legislature. The additional costs of providing staffing assistance to the study during the interim can be absorbed utilizing existing budgeted staff resources.

Fiscal Detail and Notes

Any additional costs to the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry from the provisions of this bill are expected to be minor and can be absorbed within existing budgeted resources.