

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# 132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

## FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2025

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Legislative Document

No. 1188

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H.P. 793

House of Representatives, March 20, 2025

**An Act to Include Harness Racing with Other Sports for Purposes  
of Sports Wagering**

(EMERGENCY)

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Reference to the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT  
Clerk

Presented by Representative COOPER of Windham.  
Cosponsored by Senator BLACK of Franklin and  
Representatives: CRAY of Palmyra, FROST of Belgrade, GUERRETTE of Caribou, HALL of  
Wilton, PERKINS of Dover-Foxcroft.

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

3           **Whereas,** Maine harness racing is an important historic sport; and

4           **Whereas,** attracting new fans to Maine harness racing is critical to the future  
5 well-being of the industry and agriculture; and

6           **Whereas,** the regulation of harness racing is under the jurisdiction of the Department  
7 of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry while the regulation of sports wagering is under  
8 the jurisdiction of the Department of Public Safety; and

9           **Whereas,** this dual regulatory environment has created a situation in which harness  
10 racing may not be shown and wagered upon at all physical sports wagering locations; and

11           **Whereas,** the 2025 racing season commences in April and this legislation must take  
12 effect before the 2025 racing season commences; and

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

17 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

18           **Sec. 1. 8 MRSA §275-B,** as amended by PL 2023, c. 51, §1, is further amended to  
19 read:

20 **§275-B. Sale of pari-mutuel pools**

21           The following persons may sell pari-mutuel pools on horse racing in accordance with  
22 this chapter and rules adopted by the commission.

23           **1. Racetracks.** A person licensed pursuant to section 271 to conduct harness horse  
24 racing with pari-mutuel betting may sell pari-mutuel pools and common pari-mutuel pools  
25 for simulcast races. The seller must be within the enclosure of the racetrack where the  
26 licensed race or race meet is conducted or, within the licensee's slot machine facilities  
27 licensed pursuant to section 1011 or at any licensee's facility licensed pursuant to section  
28 1206.

29           **2. Off-track betting facility.** A person licensed pursuant to section 275-D to operate  
30 an off-track betting facility may sell pari-mutuel pools at that licensed facility.

31           ~~**3. Facilities approved by commission.** Notwithstanding any provision of this chapter  
32 to the contrary, a person licensed pursuant to section 271 to conduct harness horse racing  
33 with pari-mutuel betting may sell pari-mutuel pools and common pari-mutuel pools for  
34 simulcast races at a facility if approved by the commission under this subsection. The  
35 commission may approve a facility under this subsection only if it is located within the  
36 same county as the commercial track where the race or races are conducted, it is not located  
37 within the same municipality as an off-track betting facility licensed under section 275-D  
38 and the municipal officers of the municipality in which the facility is located approve of  
39 the sale of pari-mutuel pools or common pari-mutuel pools at the facility. A person  
40 authorized to operate a facility that receives approval under this subsection shall provide~~

1 ~~the municipality in which the facility is located 5% of the track share of the commission~~  
2 ~~allocated by section 286, subsection 5.~~

3 ~~A person authorized to sell pari-mutuel pools and common pari-mutuel pools for simulcast~~  
4 ~~rares at a facility under this subsection may conduct at the facility any other activities~~  
5 ~~incidental to and permitted by that license under section 271.~~

6 ~~This subsection is repealed January 1, 2026.~~

7 **Sec. 2. 8 MRSA §275-C, sub-§1**, as amended by PL 2021, c. 406, §4, is further  
8 amended to read:

9 **1. Authority.** A person authorized to sell pari-mutuel pools on horse racing may sell  
10 common pari-mutuel pools for simulcast races. The sale must be conducted within the  
11 enclosure of the licensee's racetrack, at the licensee's slot machine facilities licensed  
12 pursuant to section 1011, at the licensee's off-track betting facility or at ~~a facility approved~~  
13 ~~by the commission in accordance with section 275-B, subsection 3~~ any licensee's facility  
14 licensed pursuant to section 1206.

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

## 17 SUMMARY

18 This bill allows for the sale of pari-mutuel pools by persons who are licensed by the  
19 Maine State Harness Racing Commission as commercial racetracks at facilities also  
20 licensed by the Department of Public Safety, Gambling Control Unit for sports wagering.  
21 It repeals a provision of law that restricts where persons licensed to conduct harness horse  
22 racing with pari-mutuel betting may sell pari-mutuel pools for simulcast races that  
23 otherwise would be repealed on January 1, 2026.