



### **The Bad News**

On Tuesday, February 4, 2020, Governor Tom Wolf delivered his proposed state budget to the Pennsylvania legislature. In it, he proposed to transfer \$204 million from the Race Horse Development Trust Fund (RHDTF) to address college debt for students who attend select colleges within the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education. His proposed budget would leave no money for purses or breeder incentives.

As proposed, Governor Wolf's budget would result in the end of Pennsylvania's horse racing and breeding industry, which employs 20,000 individuals, delivers a \$1.6 billion economic impact, and preserves more than 100,000 acres of open space. The consequences would be devastating for the state's larger agricultural industry and the Commonwealth's economy as a whole.

### **The Good News**

This is only a proposal put forward by the Governor. Every year, the legislature makes substantial changes to the Governor's proposed budget. Between now and the end of the fiscal year on June 30, the Pennsylvania House and Senate will evaluate and develop a state budget. The final budget will look much different once it has gone through the legislative process. Thanks to the work of the leadership of the Pennsylvania's horsemen and breeder organizations, there are already a number of legislators who understand the significant impact our industry has on jobs, open space, agriculture, and the state economy.

### **The Challenge:**

In recent years, there have been many new faces who have joined the legislature. That means new legislators who are less familiar with the horse racing and breeding industry and its contributions. Governor Wolf is being misleading about the true impact of his proposal, saying the state should stop "bankrolling" horse owners. He also claims the allocations casinos make from their slots revenues to the RHDTF are tax dollars, ignoring a state law stating they "are not funds of the Commonwealth." In reality, track operators agreed to these assessments to offset the negative impact expanded gaming would have on pari-mutuel wagering and spread the economic benefits to rural Pennsylvania.

To counter the Governor's rhetoric, we need everyone who will be impacted by the Governor's proposal to take action. This includes everyone who works in the horse racing and breeding industry. It includes everyone who works for a business or non-profit that is supported by our industry. And it includes everyone who is a fan of horseracing. There is a role everyone can play in the education process, both of our elected officials and the general public.

### **Our Response:**

Take Action! We need to show the damage the Governor's proposal would cause to individuals, businesses, non-profits, open space, and the welfare of horses. We need to inform legislators that breeder funds and purses are the lifeblood of our industry!

We all need to be part of this education process! On the reverse side are action steps that we encourage everyone who cares about the horse racing and breeding industry to take to help ensure we are successful in turning back Governor Wolf's disastrous proposal.

*The Pennsylvania Equine Coalition is the statewide political voice of our horse racing and breeding industry. Member organizations include PA Horse Breeders Association, PA Horsemen's Benevolent & Protective Association, PA Harness Horsemen's Association, PA Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association, the Standardbred Breeders Association of Pennsylvania, and the Meadows Standardbred Owners Association.*

# Take Action



## 1. Meet with your legislator:

This is the most important action you can take!

Schedule separate meetings with both your State Representative and State Senator in their local district office. Even better, invite them out for a tour of your farm or small business. Share your personal story. Explain how your job or business depends on the racing and breeding industry. Tell them the impact on you, your family, or your business if racing and breeding ceased to exist in Pennsylvania. Help educate them about what the industry means to our entire state.

If you are a business owner, educate your legislator about the small businesses and farms you support as a customer for supplies and equipment, construction services, transportation, feed and bedding. Share information about the open space you preserve, non-profits you support, and businesses you may supply, such as mushroom farms. Talk to them about the retired race horses you may care for on your farm. You can find contact info for your state legislator by entering your home address at:

<https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/findyourlegislator/>

## 2. Prepare a written testimonial that touches on some or all of the above points.

- Please share your testimonial via email with Pete Peterson, the Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Equine Coalition at [ppeterson@bellevuepr.com](mailto:ppeterson@bellevuepr.com). Be sure to include your name, occupation, employer, town, county, and contact information (phone/email). The Equine Coalition will share these testimonials with legislators, post to social media channels, and utilize them in press releases targeting various regions of the state.
- Consider sharing your written testimonial with your local newspaper as a letter to the editor.
- Share your story on social media. If you are on Facebook or Twitter, help educate your friends and the general public by posting your testimonial using the hashtag #WeArePAHorseRacing
- Encourage co-workers, friends, and others impacted by Wolf's proposal to share a testimonial too.

## 3. Talk to Vendors / Customers / Non-Profits You Support

We need to show legislators and Governor the **broad**, negative impacts his proposal will have beyond just horsemen and breeders. Please consider reaching out to your vendors, customers, or non-profits your organization may support and encourage them to share a testimonial of their own, either by emailing or calling Pete Peterson at [ppeterson@bellevuepr.com](mailto:ppeterson@bellevuepr.com) or 215-990-8928. Ideas include:

Farmers/Suppliers you buy hay and straw from  
Company that repairs your barns/fencing  
Horse Trailer Vendor and/or Manufacturer  
Veterinarian  
Boarding and Training Facilities  
Jockey / Jockey Agents

Mushroom farmers you sell straw/manure to  
Farm/Feed Equipment Vendor or Manufacturer  
Tack and Grooming Supplier  
Equine Dentist  
Farrier  
Track Employees

## 4. Record a video testimonial

We have people on site today and who will be at future events who are prepared to record your video testimonial on camera to share on social media and with legislators. Make your voice heard!