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March 23, 2017

TO: House Committee on Appropriations
FR: Brad Harrelson, Executive Director
RE: Written Testimony supporting HB 2173, an act relating to horse and greyhound racing

The Kansas Horse Council (KHC) is a non-profit organization that provides the Kansas equine industry with leadership and direction through education, promotion and public policy advocacy. The KHC has 27 Club/Association members, and individual and family membership in all 105 Kansas Counties. Our members are a diverse group with varying interests in the horse industry. The common bond among all horse owners is that they have a genuine desire to see the industry grow in Kansas.

Kansas has a horse population of approximately 107,000 and a big part of the equine industry in our state is the racing industry. With passage of this legislation it is anticipated over 3,000 new jobs would be created across the state and stimulate millions of dollars of new economic activity.

Despite our thriving past, the racing industry in Kansas has suffered. Declining resources due to the significant increase in competition for recreational spending since 2007, it has led breeders to move their operations to other states. Lack of funding for purses has caused individuals to take their racehorses to other states where they have the chance to make more money. Our racing industry in Kansas is failing at an alarming rate and cannot continue on this current path.

The Kansas Horse Council supports HB 2173, specifically *new section 6* of the bill, establishing the Kansas Horse Council fund. The positive results of passing this proposal for the good of the horse industry are remarkable. Not only would this stimulate revival of the racing industry, it will support the entire horse population in Kansas. It would allow funding for:

1. Therapeutic riding centers
2. Equine rescue centers
3. Public education
4. Tourism and event promotion
5. Seminars and clinics
6. Trail development
7. Scholarships for continued equine education
8. Research and development

The Kansas Horse Council supports HB 2173 due to the benefits and economic impact that this represents to the growth of the equine industry in Kansas. We urge your favorable consideration for passage and thank you for your support of the equine industry in Kansas.