

Chairman Tarwater and Members of the House Commerce, Labor and Economic Development Committee:

HB 2280

My name is Jeanie Laymon. My husband, Kenny, and I reside in Neosho Falls, Kansas. We are life-long residents of Kansas. We have been heavily involved in the oil industry as well as farming and ranching, primarily raising cattle. Several years ago, we became deeply involved in racing American Quarter Horses. We have been successful in this endeavor as well. That is not without investing substantial amounts of money in the industry to reach our goals.

We purchased a state-of-the-art breeding and training facility south of El Dorado, Kansas with a residential property in order to manage the operation on a day-to-day basis. We have invested over \$1M in this facility. The operation employs from 7 to 10 full-time employees to assist with training the racing stock and breeding of future prospects to support our business. We also employ veterinarians, farriers, jockeys, exercise riders and other necessary personnel to make sure we do everything necessary to succeed in racing.

We are not a public training stable. We own and train only for ourselves. At present, we have 24 racehorses in training at Remington Park in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma in addition to maintaining our home base operation in El Dorado. I cannot over-emphasize the amount of dedication and financial commitment it takes to succeed in the racing business just like any other business endeavor.

We started out racing at The Woodlands in Kansas City and at Eureka Downs in Eureka, Kansas. In 2007, we were forced to race our horses out of state. At present, we spend most of our time in Oklahoma. First, at Remington Park in Oklahoma City; then at Fair Meadows in Tulsa; and finally in the fall at Will Rogers Downs in Claremore. My husband is directly in charge of the racing operation as a licensed trainer. We have enjoyed numerous stakes winners and have been recognized as leading owners, by money earned, on several different occasions. We spare no expense necessary to care for our horses and succeed. The competition in this business is very keen.

We desperately need a change in current law here at home in Kansas. A change that will finally level the playing field and allow Kansas to re-open The Woodlands and Eureka Downs. A change that will place this industry in the same tax rate as the Kansas-owned destination casinos. Change the Kansas state tax rate in current law to 22% for racetracks and you will soon see the horse industry once again flourish in our state. The investment it takes to support this industry will literally touch related businesses and services in every county in Kansas. It seems a tragedy that most of these dollars are now going out of state.

I can assure the members of this committee that Kenny and I are both "rural Kansans". We have been and always will be. But, I can also assure you that we aren't getting any younger and it sure would be nice to come home and spend our money right here in Kansas.

Thank you.

  
Jeanie Laymon