

Testimony

Statement of Don Barberino, Director of Marketing of Autotote Enterprises, Inc. in Favor of Raised Bill No. 6358 – An Act Concerning Additional Off Track Betting Facilities.

February 10, 2009

Senator Stillman, Representative Dargan and distinguished members of the Public Safety and Security Committee, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today in support of Raised Bill No. 6358, An Act Concerning the Additional Off Track Betting Facilities, which simply allows the simulcasting or display of video at the Milford and Putnam branches.

Last year, both local legislative bodies in Milford and Putnam approved the location of an OTB in their communities. In order for this to occur, the local legislative body holds public hearings and requires other levels of approval as well as that of the Division of Special Revenue. Ultimately, the decision whether to allow an OTB branch or simulcasting facility rests with the local legislative body.

Simulcasting or the display of video enhances the experience of the racing fan by allowing them to watch the race. Currently, racing fans will only be able to view the odds and hear the race call. Members of the public can view live horse racing over cable TV and also over the internet and even on their blackberry devices. Indeed, if you log on to ESPN.com and select horse racing, you can view streaming video of live horse races around the country.

In 2007, the legislature approved simulcasting or the display of video at the branches located in Norwalk, East Haven, Waterbury and Torrington. Given the numerous media outlets to watch live horse racing in today's society, it would be helpful if this committee and the legislature would consider authorizing the ability to simulcast in all allowed facilities. Of course, even with this authorization, the local legislative body still would have to provide approval.

To my knowledge, Connecticut is the only state with legalized pari-mutuel wagering, that does not allow the races to be televised in the branches unless new legislation is enacted.

I ask for your full support of Raised Bill No. 6358 and again thank you for the opportunity to speak here today. I would be happy to answer any questions the committee may have.