

March 3, 2011

*Statement of Robert D. Tobin of TCORS Capitol Group, LLC in Favor of S.B. No. 1037 (Raised) – An Act Concerning Off-Track Betting Branch Betting Facilities.*

Senator Hartley, Representative Dargan and distinguished members of the Public Safety and Security Committee, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today in support of Raised Bill No. 1037, An Act Concerning Off-Track Betting Facilities.

The proposed legislation provides local communities the opportunity to decide whether to include simulcasting or display of video when considering an opportunity to host a new off-track betting facility.

Currently, a local community can vote in favor of having a branch in their town, but then needs state legislative permission to show the live race. Patrons would be able to hear the race and wager on it, but not watch the race unless new legislation is passed.

As you may recall, we came before the Committee over the last two years to ask for legislation to allow simulcasting at our facilities in Milford, Putnam, New London, Manchester and Willimantic. Our new business model incorporates racing into existing or newly created sports bars. This has been a benefit to these businesses allowing them to generate additional food and beverage revenue in a very difficult economic climate. It also assists the towns in which these facilities are located by generating revenue and jobs for the community.

We are just asking to streamline the process. We already have the right to open three additional branches. The present process requires us to get local approval to open a branch, get Division of Special Revenue approval and then return to the legislature for one thing – to allow the races to be shown on television. If we get that approval, we then have to return to the local community and the Division of Special Revenue. This last step is largely a formality but it adds time to the process. The second step – coming back to get permission to televise adds typically at least a year.

In no case where we have gotten local and Division of Special Revenue approval in the past has the General Assembly denied us the opportunity to televise the races

In this day and age when the state legislature is grappling with important fiscal issues, it is not efficient for the community, Sportech or the state legislature to have to come back annually and introduce legislation for the right to televise the races.

Sportech purchased the off-track betting operation from Autotote last fall and is committed to growing the company, creating jobs and increasing the tax revenue it pays the State and the local host communities. Removing this unnecessary and burdensome regulation would be helpful, and it echoes the Governor’s call to make Connecticut a more business friendly state.

Simulcasting or the display of video enhances the experience of the racing fan by allowing them to watch and listen to the race. Without simulcasting, racing fans can only view the odds and hear the race call. Members of the public can view live horse racing over cable TV, over the Internet, and even on their mobile phones. Indeed, if you log on to ESPN.com and select horse racing, you can

view streaming video of live horse races from around the country. It has been our experience that states that have legalized pari-mutuel wagering do not typically require additional legislation to televise races at a wagering facility. More commonly, there is concomitant approval of televising a race once the state's racing commission has approved wagering.

I ask for your full support of Raised Bill No. 1037, and again thank you for the opportunity to provide my testimony.