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Subject: Ohio Issues 2 & 3  
Ohio Horseman's Council  
Legislative Report - Ohio

There are two issues on the ballot this November that involve the equine industry:

### **Issue 2: Ohio Livestock Care Standards Board**

The Ohio Horseman's Council strongly supports Issue 2.

Issue 2 would create the above board to set standards for livestock and poultry care, food safety, supply and availability, disease prevention, farm management, and animal well-being. The board members would be appointed by the governor and legislature and would include family farmers, veterinarians, a food-safety expert, a representative of a local humane society, members of statewide farm organizations, the dean of an Ohio agriculture college and two consumers. The state agriculture director would lead the panel. This ballot was sponsored by the Ohio Farm Bureau and has broad support in both the Ohio House and Senate. It is a pre-emptive move to prevent out-of-state activist groups from making emotional appeals to the Ohio electorate that would impose ill-considered standards for care of livestock.

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) has targeted Ohio for a humane treatment of animals campaign. The HSUS is an animal rights group, not an animal welfare group whose hidden agenda is to make meat and poultry products more expensive, less available with the ultimate aim of removing them from the marketplace. The HSUS, surprised at how quickly the Farm Bureau moved to counter their initiatives, has characterized this Issue as a move by "big agriculture" in Ohio to avoid new humane standards being developed in Ohio. Since this issue was developed at the behest of the Ohio Farm Bureau with 60,000 members, mostly from small farms, this is hardly the case.

The Ohio Horseman's Council supports Issue 2 to insure that important decisions on the quality, safety and availability of our food supply as well as the humane treatment of our farm animals remains under local control with Ohioans as it should be!

### **Issue 3: A Constitutional Amendment to Allow One Casino in Cleveland, Cincinnati, Columbus and Toledo**

The Ohio Horseman's Council does not take a position on Issue 3 but offers the following information to help our members develop their own positions on this amendment.

Issue 3 will allow casinos to operate in four Ohio cities and will impose a 33% tax on their gross revenues to be distributed as follows:

- 51% among all 88 counties in proportion to their populations
- 34% among all public school districts
- 5% among all host cities
- 3% to the Ohio casino control commission
- 3% to the Ohio state racing commission fund
- 2% to a state law enforcement training fund
- 2% to a state problem gambling and addictions fund

Competition from these casinos will have an adverse effect on the existing gambling operations of racetracks in Ohio. The 3% of gambling revenues received from the above tax distribution will not be enough to offset these anticipated losses and some racetracks in Ohio, already stressed by limitations on their gambling operations, may go out of business.

Because of this negative effect on the racing industry, some equine groups in Ohio are opposing Issue 3.

There are many factors to consider when deciding on whether to permit casino gambling in Ohio. Many of them are far more important personally to our members than the impact on Ohio racing and therefore we feel that our members should be well-informed and make their own decision on Issue 3.

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