



Oakhurst

EQUINE VETERINARY SERVICES

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February 17, 2026

Chair Anthony Broadman
900 Court St. NE, S-423
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support of SB 1524 - Creates a continuing allocation of lottery revenues to support specified horse racing events and facilities.

Dear Chair Broadman,

The Root family name is synonymous with Oregon horse racing and has been involved through breeding, training, and/or owning since 1980. With racing at yet another perilous crossroads, we are writing to you in fervent support of SB 1524. The Roots have owned and operated Oakhurst Equine Veterinary Services, one of the larger privately owned equine-only veterinary practices in the state, and Oakhurst Thoroughbreds, a 147-acre thoroughbred farm, since 1996. We currently employ nearly 20 full or part-time/seasonal employees from varied backgrounds that support the veterinary practice, care for the farm's roughly 50 owned or boarded thoroughbreds, and perform seasonal breaking and training through Oakhurst Racing Stable.

Dr. Jack and Margaret (Cookie) Root founded a thoroughbred horse farm in Newberg because they were drawn to the Chehalem Valley and Yamhill County by the beautiful landscape, rural feel yet close proximity to immediate family, growing agricultural economy, and to be near equine enthusiasts like themselves. Jack's lifelong passion for the science and practice of horse health and care developed from over nearly four decades of hands-on work as an Owner, Breeder, Trainer and Equine Veterinarian. Cookie was born to city dwellers, but quickly found herself in love with farm life. While Jack's passion may be the breeding and genetics of horse racing focusing on the matings and young foals, Cookie is drawn to the action and racing side, and the comradery of partnerships with family and friends.

Jack and Cookie's eldest son, Ben, is the definition of someone "bit by the bug." He has held nearly a dozen positions in Oregon racing including Paddock Pooper-Scooper, Photo Finish Attendant, Public Relations and Marketing, Groom, Exercise Rider, Pony Person, Racing Secretary, Owner, and was one of Oregon's most prominent trainers in the 2000's. His role now consists of Practice and Farm Manager for the Oakhurst Team, but can be found at the majority of race meets throughout the state recreating, eating, lodging, and supporting the great Oregon communities that support horse racing.

Between the three, they have over 5000 starts, 800 wins, and \$4.3M in earnings as Trainers, with a heavy anchor portion coming from here at home in Oregon. (Equibase, www.equibase.com).

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Over the years, thoroughbred breeding and racing has been decimated on a local level. With tracks closing (Salem, Portland Meadows, Burns) and state and native american competition for the gambling dollar, racing has contracted significantly. Even with extremely high-end stallions relative to the regional market, commercial thoroughbred breeding at the farm (and the state) is down over 90% from its peak (2026 Oregon Jockey Club Fact Book). Through it all, we will not quit. This is our home. This is our life's passion. We eat, drink, sleep, and dream of winning the Kentucky Derby with a horse raised in Oregon. But we also need a place to run those Oregon-raised horses that don't make it to the Kentucky Derby (nearly all of them!). Oregon-bred foals averaged earning approximately 45% of their winnings inside of Oregon over the last five years, less 2022 (when Oregon was unable to hold a fall commercial meet due to the operator shutting down) (2026 Oregon Jockey Club Fact Book).

Racing opportunity drives hopes and dreams, and motivates us to breed and raise thoroughbreds. As an industry means of survival, 2026 Oregon purses are already slated to be cut, and racing days decreased. We support the Oregon racing circuit with a small handful of horses per season, and this year will be no different with three initially headed to Grants Pass, and one to three more slated to join later in the summer. If Oregon horse racing goes away because we do not have the funding to operate or draw horses and trainers, so does the Oakhurst investment in local training fees, farm labor, feed, bedding, farriery, tack, veterinarian, and much much more that goes with them. Less opportunity means less horses bred and raised in Oregon.

Horse racing folks come from all walks of life. The horses give them purpose, a reason for waking up each morning. Fierce competitors become the best of friends. The old adage "Sport of Kings" does not ring further from the truth here in Oregon. Racing in Oregon is for everybody. In fact, 2025 Leading Jockeys & Trainers included 62.5% Hispanic, and in total 87.5% Women or Minorities. (Compiled via InCompass / Equibase)

Horse racing, like numerous other industries, is challenged by rising labor, insurance, and operating costs while facing flat revenues. Oregon is not the biggest or the best horse racing in the region, but it is HOME. What Oregon horse racing we have left relies on some greyhound generated income. By stripping that from us in 2027 (due to banning gambling on greyhounds in Oregon), you are essentially removing an entire industry from life support. We urge you, please support SB 1524 - give us a chance to survive. We are a resilient bunch, we will continue to support each other and fight for our livelihoods and dreams.

We would greatly encourage a farm tour, a meeting, a brief phone call, or any other means of communicating our enthusiasm and plea for the Oregon race horse and the communities that support them.

Respectfully,



Dr. Jack B. Root, Founder/Owner Oakhurst Equine Veterinary Services, Oakhurst Thoroughbreds.
Thoroughbred Veterinarian/Breeder/Owner. Oregon Thoroughbred Owners & Breeders Association
Past President & Current Board Member.



Margaret "Cookie" Root, President Oakhurst Equine Veterinary Services. Owner, Oakhurst Racing
Stable. Thoroughbred Breeder/Owner.



Ben Root, Practice Manager, Oakhurst Equine Veterinary Services. Farm & Racing Manager, Oakhurst
Thoroughbreds and Oakhurst Racing Stable. Thoroughbred Owner. Oregon Horsemen's Benevolent
and Protective Association Secretary Treasurer (Wilsonville, OR)

Cc: Senate Committee on Finance & Revenue