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Canton, MI 48187

December 9, 2019

Senator Kevin Daley  
Chair, Agriculture Committee  
Michigan Senate

*Via email: OfcSCC@senate.michigan.gov*

**Re: Opposition to SB 12, SB 661 and HB 4310**

Dear Sen. Daley and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide information to the committee. Attorneys for Animals, Inc. (AFA) is a Michigan non-profit and 501(c)(3) organization of legal professionals and animal advocates. The organization's Board of Directors voted to **oppose SBs 12 and 661, and HB 4310**.

Our opposition is based on the fact that these bills prop up the dying<sup>i</sup> Michigan horseracing industry, an industry that is abusive to horses. These bills would legalize different kinds of betting on horseraces, including from cell phone apps, off-track and after-the-race betting. These revisions to the Horse Racing Law of 1995 will encourage more gambling on horse races by those who simply like to gamble.

Many of you have heard about the widely publicized deaths at the Santa Anita Racetrack in California this year. But our own state has a recent history of horseracing deaths, too. In fact, a horse died in July 2018 at Michigan's sole remaining track.<sup>ii</sup> Since 2015, when only one racetrack (Hazel Park Raceway) and one harness-racing track (Northville Downs) were open, reports obtained through FOIA requests reveal:

- 2017: 5 deaths at Hazel Park (data didn't include deaths from training accidents, or from the harness track).<sup>iii</sup>
- 2016: 3 deaths (all Hazel Park)<sup>iv</sup>
- 2015: 3 deaths, 2 at Hazel Park, 1 at Northville<sup>v</sup>

The causes of death<sup>vi</sup> were varied, but clearly indicate the toll that this sport takes on the very animals who sustain it.

[www.attorneysforanimals.org](http://www.attorneysforanimals.org)  
[info@attorneysforanimals.org](mailto:info@attorneysforanimals.org)

These bills are aimed at reviving a dying industry. The pain and suffering caused to horses by this industry is of questionable financial benefit to the state. We request that these bills not be reported out of committee.

Very Truly Yours,



Beatrice M. Friedlander, JD  
President

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<sup>i</sup> Saginaw Valley Downs, closed 2005 after 25 years of racing  
Great Lakes Downs, closed 2007 after 18 years of racing  
Jackson Harness Raceway, closed 2008 after 60 years of racing  
Pinnacle Race Course, closed 2010 after 2 years of racing  
Mount Pleasant Meadows, closed 2013 after 28 years of racing  
Sports Creek Raceway, closed 2015 after 28 years of racing  
Hazel Park, closed 2018 after 69 years of racing

**Source:** <https://horseracingwrongs.org/category/death-reports-michigan/>

<sup>ii</sup> Ibid, a horse named Ounce Hanover died on July 21, 2018 due to “fractured front leg” per the author’s FOIA request to the Michigan Gaming Control Board

<sup>iii</sup> <https://horseracingwrongs.org/2018/02/03/suspensory-rupture-carpus-fracture-epistaxis-hazel-parks-dead-2017/>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://horseracingwrongs.org/2017/02/08/killed-at-hazel-park-2016/>

<sup>v</sup> <https://horseracingwrongs.org/2016/01/30/dead-in-michigan-2015/>

<sup>vi</sup> A sampling includes “suspensory rupture”, the horse having been run in four races prior to dying and “epistaxis” (bled from the nose), *supra* at iii; “large vessel rupture”, *supra* at iv; “post-race, ruptured artery”, *supra* at v