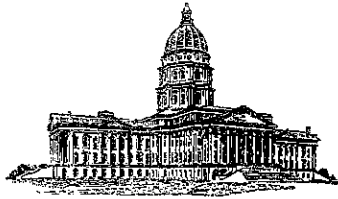


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HOUSE CHAMBER

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AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES
BUDGET
UTILITIES & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

February 21, 2019

RE: Proponent Testimony for HB 2280

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I want to say thanks to you and your committee for hearing HB2280. My interest in this bill stems from the long racing tradition in Greenwood County and Eureka Downs, the Horse Racing Capitol of Kansas. In the 1870's, the folks in Greenwood County started having horse races. They would bring their horses to town and race against their friends and neighbors. And yes, in 1870 they started gambling on horse races in Greenwood County. The highlight of Greenwood County Fair from its first beginning, was the horse races.

In the 1950's, besides the thoroughbred horse races, Eureka started having harness horse races, and in the early 1960's when the harness races faded out, quarter horse races began to flourish, and a dog track was built inside of the horse track where they could alternate between horse and dog races.

In 1987, when the gaming law was passed and pari-mutuel wagering was allowed, Eureka Downs was the first track to be up and running. Several businessmen in the Eureka area provided the finances for the new facilities. The projections for how large of an attendance the horse races would have were greatly over estimated and it was evident that the projected 10-20 thousand people for race day was actually only going to be 1-3 thousand and the payoff on the note at the bank was going to be extremely difficult.

Anthony Downs, the only other county fair track, came to the same realization and so the law was changed to include a county fair fund to subsidize the tracks that would in turn help train horses to go on to bigger tracs with bigger purses. Eureka Downs continued to hold races until about 2008 when other horse

Representative Larry Hibbard

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and dog tracks in Kansas closed after the election failed to bring a racino into Sedgwick County.

The Greenwood County Fair Association has continued to maintain the track to the point that within a two or three month's notice, Eureka Downs would be ready for its first race. This has not come easy, as many people have contributed both time and money to keep the track operable.

During the past three years, Eureka has experienced two tornadoes which have taken different paths across the town with both causing damage to the Eureka Downs facility. The Eureka community has joined together to make the necessary repairs.

As we talk about revitalization of our rural area, I can assure you that the 2% county fair fund of the gaming margin profit that Eureka Downs would receive, would do wonders for the little community.

To me, this bill is a win-win proposition. Not only will it generate dollars for the state of Kansas, it will also create economic development in both the Leavenworth and Wyandotte County area and the Eureka community.

I sincerely beg and plead for your support for HB2280.

Larry Hibbard
Kansas State Representative
District 13