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TREATMENT OF INJURED RACEHORSES

House Bill 5240

Sponsor: Rep. John Llewellyn

Committee: Appropriations

Complete to 2-17-98

A SUMMARY OF HOUSE BILL 5240 AS INTRODUCED 10-7-97

The bill would amend the Horse Racing Law to establish an endowment to fund a Michigan racehorse chair in the College of Veterinary Medicine at Michigan State University and to clarify language in the act regarding under what circumstances certain drugs and paraphernalia otherwise prohibited by the act would be permitted. Specifically, the bill would do the following:

Endowment. The act currently requires that revenue received under the act be paid into the state treasury and placed in the Michigan Agriculture Equine Industry Development Fund. Money cannot be expended from the fund except as appropriated by the legislature. Money appropriated for the fund is then expended by the director of the Department of Agriculture with the advice and assistance of the racing commissioner to provide funding for various agriculture and equine industry development programs as prescribed by the act. House Bill 5240 would add a provision to also require the establishment of a \$2 million endowment to fund, by December 31, 2001, a Michigan racehorse chair in the College of Veterinary Medicine at Michigan State University. The chair would be responsible to lead programs aimed at improving the well-being, health, and competitiveness of Michigan's racehorses. The chair would also have to chair a committee to advise the director of the Department of Agriculture about disbursement of equine research funds.

Miscellaneous provisions. According to the Office of the Racing Commissioner in the Department of Agriculture, due to a variation in entry times and procedures at the various racetracks statewide, current law prevents some breeds of horses from receiving certain veterinary care and treatment even though a race is three or four days away that another breed is permitted to have up to 48 hours before the race. Therefore, the bill contains several language changes and new provisions to clarify the permitted use of certain medications, medical paraphernalia, and timing of procedures. Currently, the act regulates the veterinary care of horses that are intended to be entered, are entered, or participate in races with pari-mutuel wagering or non-betting races and workouts conducted at licensed race meetings. The bill would add clarification by changing the language in the act to refer to horses receiving treatment up to 48 hours before a race or having certain drugs present at the time that a race in which the horse were entered began.

Under the act, it is prohibited for a person to possess certain drugs, controlled substances, and syringes and hypodermic needles in buildings both within the confines of a licensed racetrack and off-track facilities. The bill would clarify that a person could possess and orally administer drugs, foreign substances, or controlled substances to a horse within the confines of a racetrack, stable, shed, building, or grounds of a licensed race meeting as long as the medications were

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obtained from a veterinarian licensed under the act, were within accepted standards of veterinary practice in the state, and were labeled and stored in a manner and form prescribed by the racing commissioner. Further, a true and complete written record of the veterinarian's examination, examination findings, diagnosis and treatment of the horse, and all drugs or foreign substances prescribed for the horse by that veterinarian would have to be provided to the commissioner for review upon request. Persons administering drugs, foreign substances, controlled substances, or using or possessing syringes and hypodermic needles for use on a horse within the confines of off-track facilities housing horses eligible to race on the racetrack of the race meeting licensee would be subject to the same requirements.

MCL 431.316 et al.

Analyst: S. Stutzky

■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.