



STANDARD BREED OWNERS ASSOCIATION, INC.
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Via e-mail - dgall@standardbredcanada.ca

Dear Mr. Dan Gall,

I have been an advocate for horsemen's rights my entire adult life. I have served for over forty years without compensation at the Standardbred Owners Association of New York (SOA of NY) most of that time as its President.

Reading about the potential battles apparently created by management, between two horsemen's associations COSA and OHHA, conjures up memories of internal disputes amongst groups themselves as well as outside attacks initiated by racetrack operators seeking to sow division between horsemen to weaken them as a coherent and unified group. The operator's goal has usually been to gain a more desirable negotiating entity to deal with, sometimes even going so far as to dictate terms to be incorporated in written agreements for them.

Reading the well written document authored by Robert Burgess, dated February 10, 2019, one discerns a further complication as far as a potential Thoroughbred complication to this divestiture issue. In most cases, Standardbred racing is sentenced to death especially where one operator has its hand on, and control of, both industries, Thoroughbred and Standardbred.

If, as I further understand, dues are paid by individuals to be members of OHHA, and its members continue to support that organization, it appears to have earned its representative status. If OHHA is currently being funded to administer to the benevolent needs of its members it is hard to imagine, absent malfeasance, why it should be divested of the trust placed in it by that membership. A trust placed in it by the voluntary dues payment by those horsemen who have no complaint in OHHA's administration of "their" benefits.

Where divestiture such as this is allowed to occur, it is especially troublesome where track management is in a position to influence the outcome of any decision that can contemplate and effectuate such a result. This is especially where horsemen, have exercised "their" own "free will" in choosing a representative. Such action allows a track operator, here Woodbine Entertainment Group (WEG), to participate directly or indirectly, in the destruction, or creation of friction and division between representative horsemen's groups. It seems obvious that such funding divestiture could have serious life threatening implications for one of the two representative horsemen's groups. The stated goal is thus achieved, a weakened horsemen's community. Any effort, by whatever means that are directed at weakening any group of horsemen today, weakens all horsemen today and tomorrow, if left uncorrected.

The potential for abuse by any track operator having influence that allows it to occupy a position to vote on the benevolent funding of one group, versus another, allows WEG or whoever the management, to rid itself of any adversary organization by undermining its structure, and

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purpose in serving those members who have “freely” chosen to become its members. While all participants may continue to receive their benefits, a very dangerous precedent is set when management’s fingerprints are all over a funding decision between two organizations.

Distribution of funds to a horsemen’s association, for its members benefits, should be fixed by statute, not left to anyone else’s control, except that of the “free will” of that membership.

Representative horsemen’s groups should be free of any influence or meddling by racetrack operators.


Again, divestiture of funding to a horsemen’s group administering to the needs of its dues paying members should in no way be allowed to suffer at the hand, influence or input of any kind by any track management.

This particular change in benefits funding might be accompanied by a diminution of benefits to harness beneficiaries in order to serve the needs of the thoroughbreds, as can be discerned from the Burgess, February 10th letter referenced above.

I should hope that you can lead in an effort for a democratic resolution of this problem for the good of the horsemen of Standardbred Canada who have voluntarily selected OHHA as “their” chosen voice in the province for the administration of their benefits.

It appears that a court challenge may reveal a number of conflicts of interest in the vote taken by those involved in this decision, hopefully that will not be the path required. It is much better if a solution reversing this decision is made.

Respectfully submitted,



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