



*Illinois Thoroughbred Horsemen's Association, Inc.*

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Dear Gaming Board Members:

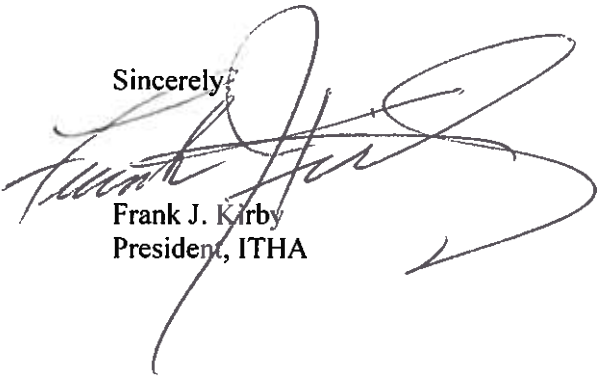
Thoroughbred racing has been an integral part of Hawthorne Race Course and Illinois for almost 100 years. Tim Carey's idea of a Champions Casino & Resort is brilliant. He is thinking outside the box. This concept will benefit not only the 40,000 people involved in horse racing, but more importantly, the area and all the people of Illinois.

Since their announcement of this proposal, we have heard only unanimous support from our thousands of members about the opportunities that wait. Without question this development would return Illinois racing to preeminence on the national circuit. With a thoroughly modern facility, increased purses and exposure to hundreds of thousands of new fans the entire industry will benefit.

Increased purses will lead to increased horse populations, which will provide for bigger fields of races. More competition will increase the quality of racing, the opportunity for Illinois breeding and the volume of betting on Illinois' horseracing product.

As you undoubtedly know we have been awaiting legislative support for slots or impact fees for years. Hawthorne's innovative casino bid is proof of their dedication to this industry and it is the only serious current option for immediate relief to Illinois horsemen.

Sincerely,



Frank J. Kirby  
President, ITHA



Greg Szymski  
Executive Director, ITHA

*Frank J. Kirby  
President  
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