

The Inside Track

Legislative Update for the Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association

The House of Representatives returned to Harrisburg for session on Sept. 19; the Senate returned on Sept 26. With a very limited number of session days and a presidential election on the horizon, it's unclear how much work will be finished before the 2015-16 legislative session draws to a close on Nov. 30. Both chambers will return on Oct. 17.

Running Against the Clock: Fantasy Sports Betting Legislation

With only 10 days of session scheduled between now and the end of the year, it's unlikely that the legislature will consider any legislation to expand gaming in the commonwealth. You'll remember that the legislature booked \$100 million of new revenue in the budget for the 2016-17 fiscal year in anticipation of gaming expansion, which would most likely include internet gaming and fantasy sports betting. Even though the Senate advanced S.B. 1324 (Williams, D-Philadelphia), which would bring regulation of fantasy sports contests under the purview of the Gaming Control Board, gaming legislation is controversial and tends to attract hundreds of amendments. There just might not be enough time or will to take this on until next session.

In the Home Stretch: Legislation that has Advanced

The legislative fix that addresses the breeders stakes payment hasn't quite made it to the finish line. The bill, which is necessary to correct errors as to how the breeders money is distributed, was amended on second consideration in the House this week and re-referred to the House Appropriations Committee. Though once it passes in the House it will need to be considered for three days in the Senate. There are enough session days to get this done in October when the legislature returns for two weeks of session before the general election.

Who Will Go the Distance? Upcoming Elections

Though the buzz nationally is about this year's presidential election, we've got a good number of interesting races to watch here in Pennsylvania. The entire House of Representatives and Senators holding odd-numbered seats are all up for re-election this year.

In Erie County, home of Presque Isle Downs:

- Rep. Patrick Harkins (D, HD-1) faces William Crotty (R);
- Rep. Florindo Fabrizio (D, HD-2) faces Pat Fuller (R);
- Rep. Ryan Bizzarro (D, HD-3) faces former Rep. Greg Lucas (R);
- Rep. Curtis Sonney (R, HD-4) has no general election challenger;
- Rep. Brad Roae (R, HD-6) faces Peter Zimmer (D);
- Rep. Parke Wentling (R, HD-17) faces Wayne Hanson (D); and
- Sen. Sean Wiley (D, SD-49) faces Daniel Laughlin (R) in the general election.

In Dauphin County, home of Penn National Race Course:

- Rep. David Hickernell (R, HD-98) has no challenger;
- Rep. Patty Kim (D, HD-103) has no challenger;
- Rep. Susan Helm (R, HD-104) faces Jody Rebarchak (D);
- Rep. Ron Marsico (R, HD-105) has no general election challenger;
- Rep. John Payne (R, HD-106) is not running for re-election, and Republican candidate Tom Mehaffie, who has no challenger, will take that seat in January;
- Rep. Mike Tobash (R, HD-125) has no challenger; and
- Sen. Rob Teplitz (D, SD-15) faces John Disanto (R).

As for members of our legislative leadership team,

- House Speaker Rep. Mike Turzai (R, HD-28) faces John Craig Hammond (D);
- House Majority Leader Rep. Dave Reed (R, HD-62) faces Patrick Edwards (D);
- House Minority Leader Rep. Frank Dermody (D, HD-33) has no challenger;
- Senate Democratic Leader Sen. Jay Costa (D, SD-43) has no challenger ; and
- Senate Majority Leader Sen. Jake Corman (R, SD-34) will not run for re-election until 2018.

We'll report back on these and other races after the Nov. 8 General Election.

Local Share Scratched

Finally, some news from the Pennsylvania Supreme Court this week. On Sept. 28, the court struck down the fee paid by casinos to municipalities that host them. According to the court, the fee is unconstitutional insofar as it imposes a nonuniform tax on casinos. Municipalities where casinos are located typically use these funds for police, EMS and firefighter services, as well as infrastructure such as new roads. The decision is stayed for 120 days in order for the General Assembly to adopt new legislation regarding collection of the municipal host fee. The fees will continue to be collected and distributed until that time.