

**SENATE . . . . . No.**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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PRESENTED BY:

***Jacob R. Oliveira, (BY REQUEST)***

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*To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:*

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act to protect horses.

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PETITION OF:

NAME:

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

*Steve Baer*

SENATE . . . . . No.

[Pin Slip]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court  
(2025-2026)

An Act to protect horses.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

1 Preamble:

2 Consistent with concerns leading to Chapter 272 Section 77 regarding the treatment of  
3 horses, horse racing must cease.

4 Chapter 272 Section 77 explicitly prohibits the “overdriving (forced horse track racing  
5 subjects horses to the physical and psychological conditions for overdriving them to run at  
6 breakneck speeds), tormenting, depriving of necessary sustenance (horses are deprived of food  
7 and water for track racing convenience), cruelly beating (the cruel public beating that a horse  
8 receives would land the abuser in jail if performed upon a dog), using in an inhumane manner in  
9 a race, game or contest” (knowledgeable equine veterinarians have stated that horses are obligate  
10 nose breathers who under racing conditions with bits in their mouths are unable to breath  
11 effectively and are slowly suffocating; it is also self-evident that horses are used as a lure or bait  
12 at their peril to attract uncaring or predatory betters)... “and whoever, [...] having the charge or  
13 custody of an animal (a horse is an animal), cruelly drives or works it when unfit for labor

14 (horses used in track racing are exclusively juvenile 2 to 4 year old horses whose  
15 musculoskeletal systems have not completely developed. Their bones will not be done fusing and  
16 their tendons and muscles will not be fully developed until they are at least six years old. This  
17 results in them often breaking bones, tearing tendons and ripping muscles. As a result they  
18 become structurally worn out, severely injured, or mortally injured), [...] or knowingly and  
19 willfully authorizes or permits it to be subjected to unnecessary torture, suffering or cruelty of  
20 any kind (horses used in track racing experience lung bleeds as a result of being forced to race;  
21 they tend to develop stomach ulcers due to the psychological stress of being isolated in stalls or  
22 being forced to race; the process of preparing a horse for racing called ‘breaking’ involves  
23 physical and psychological trauma; and knowing that a significant number of horses that are  
24 forced to race suffer physically debilitating or deadly injuries, and will lead tortured lives or be  
25 murdered as a result of track racing acknowledges unnecessary torture, suffering or cruelty of  
26 Ch.272, S.77 ) [...].”

27 Be It Enacted

28 With Regard to Horses

29 1. Notwithstanding the provisions of Chapter 128A or any general or special law to  
30 the contrary, no horse racing or racing meeting where any form of betting or wagering on the  
31 speed or ability of horses occurs shall be conducted or permitted in the Commonwealth of  
32 Massachusetts and the Gaming Commission is hereby prohibited from accepting or approving  
33 any application request for racing dates for horse racing.

34 2. All other provisions of Chapter 128A shall be construed as if they contain no  
35 references to horses, horse racing, or horse races.

36           3.       Other than the racing licensee in Norfolk County as of January 1, 2024, there shall  
37 be no racing of animals for speed in the Commonwealth with or without wagering.

38           Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the effective date of this  
39 section shall be January 1, 2027.

40           With Regard to Licenses

41           1.       No racing meeting licensee, including licensees holding racing meetings in  
42 connection with State or county fairs as defined in Chapter 128A Section 1 shall simulcast or  
43 accept a wager on running horse / thoroughbred racing. No incentive shall be allowed for the  
44 perpetuation of any Gaming Commission licensee to develop and operate a facility or location  
45 that races any running horse / thoroughbred.

46           2.       Effective immediately and notwithstanding Chapter 128A, Chapter 128C, or  
47 Chapter 28K:

48           (a)       no running horse / thoroughbred horse racing license application shall be  
49 considered or approved by the Massachusetts Gaming Commission;

50           (b)       no new racing license application for a new operator for harness racing shall be  
51 considered or approved by the Massachusetts Gaming Commission;

52           (c)       no new simulcasting license other than those in existence on January 1, 2024 shall  
53 be considered or approved by the Massachusetts Gaming Commission.

54           3.       With exception for a renewal application by the racing licensee in Norfolk County  
55 as of January 1, 2024, no further application for a racing license shall be accepted or granted by  
56 the Massachusetts Gaming Commission.

57           (a)     The Norfolk County licensee shall only ever be approved for harness racing, and  
58 never for a running horse / thoroughbred horse track.

59           4.     Chapter 180 Section 14 is hereby repealed.

60           If any part of this law is found to be invalid or unenforceable, the remaining parts of the  
61 law will still be valid and enforceable.