

Editorials

- **Editorials**
- Local Columns
- Letters to the Editor
- Blogs
- Reader forums
- Polls
- [SUBMIT letters to the editor](#)

/ Opinion / Editorials /

« [Open Container Ban Should St...](#)

Stop Subsidizing Racing Industry

April 28, 2013

The Intelligencer / Wheeling News-Register

[Save](#) | [Comments \(4\)](#) | [Post a comment](#) |

Last year, \$92 million in gambling proceeds that could have gone into the state treasury to serve any number of useful purposes in West Virginia went elsewhere, instead - into the pockets of thoroughbred horse and greyhound dog breeders and racers. That would be bad enough if the money had stayed in our state. Some of it did not.

Residents of 26 other states and the District of Columbia benefitted from West Virginians' generosity in supporting the horse racing industry, as a story in today's newspaper details.

One of the ways Mountain State residents were persuaded to support legalized gambling years ago was a claim it was needed to keep West Virginia racetracks in business. So, legislation allowing gambling machines and later, full-blown casinos was written to require the tracks to subsidize racing horse and dog breeders and owners. Percentages of the pot from machine and table gambling must go into purse funds to pay winners at the tracks, and to "development" funds to support animal breeders.

A total of \$92 million was raked off the gambling returns for those purposes last year. Of that total, about \$6 million went to greyhound breeders - all located in West Virginia.

But of the about \$9 million that went to racing horse breeders, a large chunk went out of state. Thoroughbred breeders from as far away as California received checks from Charleston.

That is not how state residents were led to believe the system would work. We were told the West Virginia horse and dog racing industries would be helped - not that dozens of breeders from throughout the nation would benefit.

Defenders of the system say it needs to stay as it is. State Delegate

Randy Swartzmiller, D-Hancock, points out that if West Virginia limits payouts to in-state horse breeders, other states may follow suit.

So what? West Virginians should not be subsidizing any business or industry in the manner to which horse and dog racers have become accustomed. The money - all \$92 million of it, not just the cash going out of state - ought to be sent to local and state governments, which can put it to good use.

State Senate President

Jeff Kessler is right about subsidizing out-of-state horse breeders. It is "something we need to take a look at," he told our reporter. While lawmakers are at it, they should simply eliminate the entire rotten system of subsidizing the ponies and puppies, so to speak.

[Save](#) | [Comments \(4\)](#) | [Post a comment](#) |



12 people recommend this.

[Subscribe to The Intelligencer / Wheeling News-Register](#)

The Intelligencer / Wheeling News-Register

1500 Main St. , Wheeling, WV 26003 | 304-233-0100

© 2013. All rights reserved. | [Terms of Service and Privacy Policy](#)