

The Task Force on the Future of Off-Track Betting in New York State

Summary of Comments Received From Bettors / Press / Public

Responses

Jackson Leeds –Bettor/Fan- He made several submissions on various dates summarized below:

NYS should join Senator Lesniak's (D) (NJ) lawsuit to make sports betting legal.

That OTB's should be allowed to take bets on Palm Sunday, Easter and Christmas and Racing Law Section 105 is unconstitutional.

That Nassau OTB has settled a lawsuit alleging that they forced an employee to work on political campaigns during OTB business hours and that the person was fired when she reported the matter.

That he believes Nassau OTB selects branch locations based on who owns them and not for business reasons so money can be given to certain individuals.

That Dino Amoroso said at the Nassau OTB board meeting this week that the OTBs are considering closing on Tuesdays so they won't have to pay the tracks dark day money.

He is frustrated that the NYRA signal is not available in-home in Nassau County.

Jerry Bossert -Daily News Racing Reporter- Consolidate OTBs and let NYRA run it. The OTB system in NY should be like the ones in Pennsylvania, New Jersey or Kentucky.

Lester Wolff –Bettor/Fan- Consolidate OTBs, eliminate surcharge, offer rebates, get a centralized state-wide cable distribution, allow “sub-dollar” wagering on exotic bets and standardize posting of entries and results.

Michael McKay –Bettor/Fan- Add an additional surcharge to fund a drug testing / deterrent program. Performing enhancing drugs have ruined the integrity of the sport.

Larry –Bettor/Fan- OTB clerks should know what race a pick six wager starts with, they do not always seem to know this and as a result can not help so the wager can be placed. Clerks do not tell you the total amount of winnings for all

wagers unless specifically asked. Also stated that clerks bet while working and sometimes include the cost of some of their wagers to be covered by the next bettor.

Alanpoobah –Bettor/Fan– OTBs surcharge and take-out is too high, “OTB is a thieving organization.”

Alan Franks -Bettor/Fan– Aqueduct and Belmont facilities in need of some repairs and maintenance. Also suggest better access for the fans to view the races.

Skip –Bettor/Fan– The branch on 87th & 5th does not open timely and windows are understaffed, the clerks at the restaurant branch on 4th ave eat while on duty.

Vince Conti –Bettor/Fan/ and runs NYbred.com– Additional revenue could be made by the State and the industry by selling racing related products (i.e. books on racing / handicapping, t-shirts, Derby paraphenalia etc.)

Neil Satterly, Executive Director of SUNY New York Network – Currently the NY Network provides satellite transmission for several of NY’s OTBs but has over the years lost some OTB’s to other providers. The cost for transmission is fixed for this system therefore the cost to the remaining OTBs is increased when one OTB leaves the NY Network system. He suggest that if all the OTBs are required to use this system for satellite transmissions then the cost would be more equitable. Otherwise this service may be lost.

Liz -Bettor/Fan– Requested that NYRA lift its restriction it placed on Nassau OTB over a dispute regarding Nassau’s in-home simulcasting thereby preventing Nassau OTB (and Suffolk OTB as well) from showing any racing, including the Belmont, in-home.

Linda Edwards –Bettor/Fan– A self reported new fan to racing suggests more marketing, better facilities, particularly Belmont, and less time between races and or a half time like show to keep people entertained.

Angelo –Bettor/Fan– Suggest either closing all OTBs or lowering the takeout.

Michael Troy –Bettor/Fan– A self described long time bettor suggest allowing video streaming of races on the internet, reducing services fees for depositing money in betting accounts, lift restrictions on simulcasting New York tracks over out-of-state races, allow the cancellation of bets over the internet to give bettors the chance to change their mind or correct an error.

Gregg Sitrin – Bettor/Fan – Legalize sports betting at OTBs to increase profits.

“More Faves” – Bettor/Fan – OTBs must get sports betting to remain competitive with Delaware and other states.

Aaron Shapiro – Bettor/Fan – Consolidate the six OTBs into one and work with NYRA. Also reduce takeout and take care of the bettors. Says the recent dispute between NYRA and Nassau OTB that resulted in NYRA pulling the Television rights to Nassau only frustrates the bettors and hurts NY racing.

Ed – Bettor/Fan – Consolidate all the OTBs and NYRA, allow video streaming of NYRA races and have one TV channel with live races.

Steve Ende – Bettor/Fan – NYCOTB employees and tellers don't do their job and the NYCOTB branches are dirty. Branches should be run like the Nassau OTB branch in Carle Place.

Jonathan Krangle – Bettor/Fan – Recommends more special events, contests and give-a-ways, including providing trips to local racetracks.

John Adare – Bettor/Fan – Wants to be able to place parlay wager over the phone. Nassau OTB currently does not allow parlay wagers to be placed over the phone.

Aaron Shapiro – Bettor/Fan – Frustrated that he cannot watch NYRA races at home in Nassau County due to the current dispute between NYRA and Nassau OTB. Says the only ones being hurt are the fans, that these recent actions are good for no one and that politicians are costing NYS millions of dollars by not allowing slots (at Aqueduct).

Robert Gilbert – Bettor/Fan – Recommends reducing the minimum required bet to 10 or 50 cents so more people will bet. He believes people will be more willing to make exotic wagers because it will be more affordable. He believes this will increase handle and revenues.

Robert Massello – Bettor/Fan – Says there is no need for OTBs anymore. Internet gambling and advance deposit wagering has replaced them.

Ed O'Brien – Bettor/Fan – Doesn't like Capital OTB's Television production of racing and the procedures in place to deposit and withdraw money from his wagering account. He says NYRA's account wagering is much better but they do not offer harness racing (current law does not allow NY thoroughbred tracks to import harness track signals.) He recommends that NYRA run all wagering in the State and that all duplicative management, tote systems, TV presentations etc should be eliminated. There should be one wagering platform. (Mr. O'Brien works at CBS 6 in Albany but stated that these are his comments, not the stations.)

Richard Burger – Bettor/Fan – Suggest combining the OTBs with NYRA to end needless disputes, Nassau OTB branches are much cleaner than NYCOTBs and lowering the OTB take out.

Jared Garrick – Bettor/Fan – Says that NYRA, the Racing Commission and OTB's need to radically change and make racing and wagering exciting. He sites several problems:

1. NYRA continuously add more and more NY Bred races with horses with no racing ability.
2. There is no respect for the fans:
 - a. Late scratches are made with no explanation
 - b. \$1 trifecta, exactas, Pick 3s and Pick 4s but require \$2 bets for Pick 6s. This limits people who will place such bets.
 - c. No TV or radio coverage of races anymore
3. NY Racing does not promote the intellectual aspect of handicapping while poker continues to gain popularity in analyzing player's strategies.

John Moore – Bettor/Fan – There should be only one system and it must be under common ownership with NYRA. New legislation must provide for mandatory distribution of the signals to all ADW providers who want to take bets via computer as well as to all simulcast operators, subject to binding arbitration within New York State.

Michael Porto – Bettor/Fan – Submitted a 2-part plan to save NYCOTB:

Part I

1. Close all OTB shops (branches) except restaurants and ones like the one located on 241 Street Bronx. This will save millions in rent, security, cleaner's salaries etc.
2. All other bets to be placed via telephone or computer. Winning wagers to be charged a 5% fee. Restaurant wagers continue to be charged takeout and surcharge as under current system.
3. Small stores, similar to check cashing operations will have 2 clerks per 6 hour shifts to accept money for wagering, deposits and withdrawals. Also will sell racing programs at these locations.
4. Instead of showing 20 different races per day show 3 tracks in the afternoon so there is 3 races every half hour. Do the same in the evening and offer two races late afternoon early evening (in between the day time and night races). This will allow customers to more opportunity to watch the races and wager.
5. Management must be trimmed, there are usually 2 managers per day (at one branch).
6. Clerks from branches that are closed can work as telephone clerk operators.
7. Management in the home (central) offices must be trimmed as much as possible. There is no need for the 100 plus people that work there at present.

8. There is no need to spend money on (racing) analyst. Players will wager and don't need outside advice, the newspaper analysts are more than enough.

Part II

1. NYRA must understand they cannot control the racing signals bet in home and need to stop acting like a dictator.
2. OTBs should close on Monday each week, no OTB employee should work. This will save millions.
3. OTB restaurants do not have enough business to remain open all week, they should be open for wagering on Friday and Saturday only.