

**The Task Force on the Future of Off-Track Betting in New York State
Summary of Comments Received from the May 2009 Request For
Information From
Horsemen
As of June 18, 2009**

Standardbred Owners Associations of New York (SOA) - Recommend that OTBs be required to prominently display races from New York tracks over all out-of-state races. Alternatively recommend that a consortium of New York tracks run the OTBs, thereby eliminating conflicting interest the current set up has. An outline of the plan is provided that recommends each track be authorized to run a certain number of branches near their facility / in region. The tracks could take over existing branches in their regions with existing staffing guaranteed for set time period. The tracks would operate and fund the operations, coordinate simulcasting (with NY signals getting priority). The State in turn would agree not to expand VLT gaming any further as well as the pensions of the current OTB employees. Illinois's OTB system is referenced as a model to follow to increase revenues and make the system once more profitable.

Garry Contessa – Thoroughbred Trainer – Says the OTBs are very poorly managed and are cash cows for their executives. If the tracks don't want to run the OTBs the horsemen will. He states that it needs to be run by someone who knows the business from the bottom up and offers to be that person.

Richard Papa - President, Harness Horse Assoc. of Central New York – Supports the SOA's "New York First Initiative", which would place NYS racing first and help all affected parties in NYS including the tracks, breeders, horsemen, state/local government and the OTBs.

George Karam – President, Saratoga Harness Horsepersons Association – States they have more than 600 members. The current OTB model has failed. OTBs refuse to pay money owed to them even after directed so by the courts after they lost a suit regarding "hold-harmless" provision in the Racing Law. Further states that OTB operations are "nothing more than patronage hand outs and store front operations." Suggest the following:

- Create anew entity that eliminates all the state OTBs and replaces it with new entity
- Have the tracks & horsemen associations run the operations like as done in other states to ensure profitability and protect the NY product.
- Allow NY residents to wager from their homes, work etc. via dedicated OTB channels, land based phones, mobile phones or computers.
- Have one call center or central hub to handle all wagers thereby eliminating multiple regions and reducing costs.
- Mandate the "New York First" Initiative, which simply promotes NY racing and State residents.