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FARM BUREAU SUPPORTS SLOTS REFERENDUM

The Maryland Farm Bureau's Board of Directors recently voted to support the referendum to authorize video lottery terminals (VLTs) in the November elections.

"If passed, the slots proposal will bring much-needed income to the state and will bolster our equine and farm businesses," said MFB President Mike Phipps.

Maryland Farm Bureau has supported the efforts to enact a VLT program since 2003 in the state General Assembly. Farmers have supported slots at racetracks to stimulate the horse breeding, training and boarding industry in the state.

"Increased activity and larger purses at Maryland's racetracks will mean more business and more income for those directly involved with the equine industry," Phipps explained. "But it will also mean a larger income for local family farmers who sell hay and straw at premium prices for horses."

Past Carroll County Farm Bureau President Jim Steele, who currently serves as president of the Maryland Horse Breeders Association, encouraged Farm Bureau leaders to support the referendum. "Passage of the referendum in November and the resulting VLT facilities is expected to help plug the nearly \$700 million shortfall in the state budget," he said.

"It will recapture the estimated \$500 million-plus being spent by Marylanders in out-of-state slots facilities, and most importantly, most of the money going to the state treasury has been earmarked for education."

Maryland Farm Bureau is the largest general agriculture organization in the Free State with over 30,500 member families. Its mission is to promote and protect Maryland's agricultural industry and rural life.

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