



# 2024 Horse PAC® Annual Report

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## FOREWORD

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This annual report summarizes the 2024 activities of Horse PAC<sup>®</sup>, the Federal Political Action Committee (PAC) of the National Thoroughbred Racing Association (NTRA). The Committee was activated in 2003 to promote and facilitate the accumulation of voluntary contributions from members of the NTRA and its subsidiaries and affiliates, for the support of political parties and candidates for elective office in the United States. As a multi-issue PAC, the Committee gives bipartisan support to federal elected officials who:

- Serve on Congressional committees that oversee livestock and agricultural issues, Internet gaming, taxation, labor, immigration, energy and commerce, the Interstate Horseracing Act, and the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority.
- Are established leaders
- Understand horse racing's issues
- Have racetracks, OTBs, ADW facilities, breeding farms, training centers and other equine venues in their Districts
- Are members of the Congressional Horse Caucus
- Are emerging leaders meriting "early support"
- Have positive relationships with NTRA's Legislative Team

## MESSAGE FROM THE HORSE PAC® PRESIDENT

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April 30, 2025

I am very proud of the progress we have made at the NTRA as I continue into year four as President & CEO and am equally excited for what the future will bring.

This past year in Washington has seen major changes, with a returning President and sweeping changes in the House and Senate – both of which are now held by Republicans. The first few months of this administration and Congress have had their challenges – from the potential disruption of tariffs to uncertainty with immigration – but there is still optimism that big things will start to get done, including the tax bill and the Farm Bill. At the NTRA, we see these changes and upcoming bills as opportunities to improve the economics of the Thoroughbred industry and will continue to utilize Horse PAC as a key tool in our legislative toolbox to help make these advancements.

It's been nearly three years since we opened an office in Washington, D.C. and staked our NTRA flag on Capitol Hill. In that time, we have met with countless offices, hosted briefings and provided educational resources on issues facing the racing industry. In 2025 we hosted our third annual Kentucky Derby Reception in the Capitol. NTRA had over a dozen Members of Congress from the House and Senate in addition to over 500 Congressional staff attend. Our attendance at this event has increased year after year. Our goal is for everyone on Capitol Hill to know about the NTRA and to come to us with any issues their constituents may have, and it continues to feel like we are becoming the go-to for Thoroughbred related issues on the Hill.

In the past year, we've hosted events for Morgan McGarvey, a Democrat from Kentucky, Kirsten Gillibrand, a Democrat from New York, and Dave McCormick, a Republican from Pennsylvania. McGarvey serves in the House, while Gillibrand and McCormick both serve in the Senate.

In 2024, Horse PAC® supported 35 candidates with \$143,000. Total contributions to Horse PAC® in 2024 were \$118,050. In 2024, 65 NTRA members contributed to Horse PAC®, including 18 at the \$5,000 Champions level. The progress we have made since opening our DC office is really starting to show, and we have received greater outreach from Capitol Hill on any horse racing issues that may come up legislatively than ever before.

By directing Horse PAC® funds to specific members on strategic committees on both sides of the aisle, we have set ourselves up for success in this new presidency. Our goal is to utilize Horse PAC® to give the NTRA the most success in Washington, and 2024 proves that we're accomplishing that goal.

Sincerely,



Thomas J. Rooney, Horse PAC® President

## 2024 HORSE PAC® BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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The Horse PAC® Board of Directors is composed of NTRA members representing diverse industry stakeholder groups and geography. Board members are appointed by the Horse PAC® President; the PAC's by-laws allow up to 25 members on the Board of Directors. Board members serve one-year, renewable terms.

Under the leadership of Chairman William S. Farish, Jr., the Board raises funds for Horse PAC® from NTRA members. The Board also approves PAC disbursements. The PAC President and NTRA staff provide support and direction for annual fundraising programs and develop a plan for disbursements in consultation with the NTRA's legislative team.

The 2024 Horse PAC® Board of Directors consisted of:



### **William S. Farish, Jr., Chairman**

John C. Harris  
Stephanie Hronis  
Wilhelmina McEwan  
Justin Nicholson  
Anne W. Poulson

Thomas J. Rooney  
*President*

Keith Chamblin  
*Treasurer*

## THE NTRA LEGISLATIVE TEAM

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### **Tom Rooney**

Horse PAC President  
NTRA President and CEO

Tom Rooney served the people of Florida in the U.S. House of Representatives from 2009 to 2019, focusing primarily on economic, agricultural, national security, and military issues. Prior to serving in Congress, Rooney served with the U.S. Army as a lawyer in the JAG Corps. During his tenure, he was Special Assistant U.S. Attorney at Fort Hood, Texas, prosecuting all civilian crimes on post in the 1st Cavalry

Division. After completing active duty with the rank of captain, Rooney taught constitutional and criminal law at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York.

He received his J.D. from the University of Miami School of Law and became a member of the Florida Bar in 1999. He also has an M.A. in Political Science from the University of Florida. Rooney played football for Syracuse University and Washington & Jefferson College, where he earned a B.A. in English Literature. Rooney is married to his wife, Tara, and they have three sons.



### **Joe Bacigalupo**

Joe Bacigalupo is Vice President of Membership Development for the NTRA. Bacigalupo is based in the NTRA's Lexington, Ky. office and heads the organization's development efforts that support the NTRA's federal legislative advocacy work.

Bacigalupo served as marketing manager for Churchill Downs, Inc., before joining NTRA. In his role with CDI, Bacigalupo created and executed both short term and long-range marketing plans and programs to ensure the profit, growth and expansion of the pari-mutuel wagering product from CDI's family of Thoroughbred racetracks. Bacigalupo began his career in the horse racing industry at TVG Network, now known as FanDuel TV, where he served as field marketing manager when the fledgling television network and advance deposit wagering company launched across the United States. Prior to entering the horse racing industry, Bacigalupo worked for Georgia-Pacific Corp.

## THE NTRA LEGISLATIVE TEAM

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### **Mallory Baker**

Mallory Baker is the Political Action Committee (PAC) Coordinator for the NTRA, where she manages all aspects of PAC operations from the organization's Washington, D.C. office. In this role, she ensures regulatory compliance, drives fundraising efforts, enhances political engagement, and advocates for the NTRA's legislative priorities.

A native of Lexington, Kentucky, Mallory earned a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Kentucky. Prior to joining the NTRA in March 2025, she gained extensive experience at The Elevated Group, a leading political fundraising firm representing more than fifteen members of the House and Senate. She also served on the House Oversight Committee under Chairman James Comer, focusing on press and communications for the committee.



### **Thomas Meis**

Thomas Meis is the Communications Director for the NTRA. Meis is based in the NTRA's Washington, D.C. office and manages the organization's external communications, as well as leads the organization's advocacy efforts alongside President and CEO, former U.S. Congressman Tom Rooney.

Prior to joining NTRA, Meis served as Communications Coordinator for the nationwide law firm Tyson & Mendes, where he helped oversee the internal and external communications for the firm including producing seminars, webinars, and conferences, drafting materials for use by attorneys, and communicating with high level clients and stakeholders outside of the firm. He graduated from Syracuse University with a Bachelor of Science.

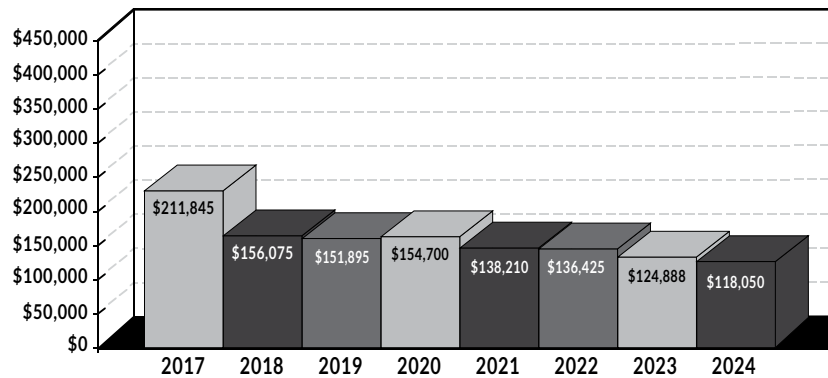
### **NTRA staff update**

Meghan Rodgers and Jordan Bonfitto have departed the NTRA. We thank both for their help with Horse PAC® while serving in the NTRA's Washington, D.C. office. Meghan accepted a position with freshman U.S. Senator Dave McCormick (R-PA) and Jordan returned to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In their new roles, both could serve as allies in Washington for the Thoroughbred racing and breeding industry.

## RECEIPTS

From inception through December 31, 2023, Horse PAC® has raised \$5,078,376. The committee raised \$367,920 for the 2017/2018 election cycle, \$306,595 for the 2019/2020 election cycle, \$274,635 for the 2021/2022 election cycle, and \$242,848 for the 2023/2024 election cycle.

**HORSE PAC® RECEIPTS SINCE 2017**



## 2024 HORSE PAC® CONTRIBUTORS

### CHAMPIONS – \$5,000

Barbara Banke	William S. Farish	Stephanie Hronis
Ramona Bass	Edward Gaylord, II	Robert V. LaPenta
Cornelia Corbett	H. Greg Goodman	Richard & Sue Ann Masson
Adele B. Dilschneider	Eric Gustavson	Justin & Katie Nicholson
Everett Dobson	Deborah R. Hancock	Carl F. Pollard
Sarah Farish	Seth Hancock	Stella Ferguson Thayer

### LEADERS – \$2,500 - \$4,999

Keith Chamblin	J. Michael O'Farrell, Jr.	Kane C. Weiner
Peter Fluor		

### WINNERS – \$1,000 - \$2,499

Ellen MacNeille Charles	Dr. Carl Gessler	Tom & Tara Rooney
James T. Dresher Jr.	Rick Gold	Allen Schubert
Deborah Easter	Roy & Gretchen Jackson	
Bob Hansan	J. Kirk & Judy Robinson	



## 2024 HORSE PAC® CONTRIBUTORS

### SUPPORTERS – UP TO \$999

Joe Bacigalupo	Patrick Kearney	Nick & Susan Nicholson
Mrs. Patricia Chapman	Patricia Klussman	John C. Oxley
Dennis Decauwer	John Kovarik	Rosilyn Polan
Charles Engel	Peter A. Leidel	Michele Ravencraft
Curtis Green	Robert Little	Meghan Rodgers
Andrew Hannosy	Donald V. Little, Jr.	Bob Sambol
Charles Hayward	John Matlusky	Susan Sensor
Bo Hirsch	Wilhelmina McEwan	Robert M. Watt III
Derek Isenberg	Maurleen Miller	Michael Wilkening
Howard Johnson	Robert Miller	Angela Woods
Russell B. Jones, Jr.	William Mott	Eddie Woods

### NTRA ADVANTAGE EQUINE DISCOUNTS

Contributors to Horse PAC® receive exclusive equine discounts on programs and services from nationally known companies like John Deere, Big Ass Fans, Sherwin-Williams, Office Depot, Farmers Insurance and more through NTRA Advantage Equine Discounts. When you use NTRA Advantage Equine Discounts, a portion of your purchase price goes to support the equine industry. To enjoy the benefits call toll-free **(866) 678-4289** or visit **[www.equinediscounts.com](http://www.equinediscounts.com)** before you buy!

## 2024 HORSE PAC® DISBURSEMENTS

### Federal Candidates by Amount\*

State	Amount	Rank
KY	\$35,500	1
NY	\$24,000	2
IN	\$10,000	3
LA	\$7,500	4
NE	\$7,500	5
NJ	\$7,000	6
CA	\$6,000	7
AR	\$5,000	8
MA	\$5,000	9
SD	\$5,000	10
FL	\$3,000	11
DC	\$2,500	12
OK	\$2,500	13
PA	\$2,500	14
AL	\$1,000	15
CO	\$1,000	16
TN	\$1,000	17
WA	\$1,000	18
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$127,000</b>	

\* Excludes disbursements to political committees that are not associated with individual candidates.

### Federal Candidates by State\*

State	Amount	Rank
AL	\$1,000	15
AR	\$5,000	8
CA	\$6,000	7
CO	\$1,000	16
DC	\$2,500	12
FL	\$3,000	11
IN	\$10,000	3
KY	\$35,500	1
LA	\$7,500	4
MA	\$5,000	9
NE	\$7,500	5
NJ	\$7,000	6
NY	\$24,000	2
OK	\$2,500	13
PA	\$2,500	14
SD	\$5,000	10
TN	\$1,000	17
WA	\$1,000	18
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$127,000</b>	

\* Excludes disbursements to political committees that are not associated with individual candidates.

## 2024 HORSE PAC® DISBURSEMENTS

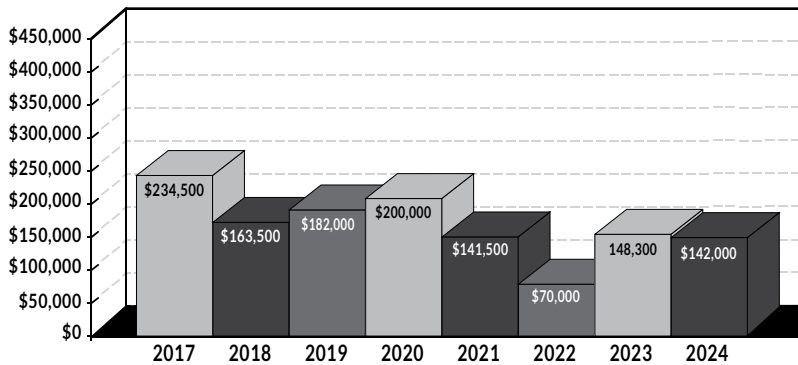
### Federal Contributions: **\$142,000**

House	\$56,500
Senate	\$11,000
Federal Leadership PACs	\$74,500

Democratic	\$50,500
Republican	\$91,500

From Inception through December 31, 2024, Horse PAC® has disbursed \$4,974,679. The committee disbursed \$398,000 for the 2017/2018 election cycle, \$382,000 for the 2019/2020 election cycle, \$211,500 for the 2021/2022 election cycle and \$290,300 for the 2023/2024 election cycle.

**HORSE PAC® DISBURSEMENTS SINCE 2017**



**Total Disbursements to Date**

**\$4,974,679**

## 2024 HORSE PAC® DISBURSEMENTS

The following candidates and political committees received Horse PAC® funds in 2024

### United States House of Representatives

House of Reps	Party	State	Re-election Year	2024 Disbursed	Committees
Andrew Garbarino	R	NY	2024	\$1,000	Financial Services; Ethics; Homeland Security
Andy Barr	R	KY	2024	\$9,500	Financial Services; Foreign Affairs; CHC (Co-Chair)
Anthony D'Esposito	R	NY	2024	\$1,000	Homeland Security; Transportation and Infrastructure
Brett Guthrie	R	KY	2024	\$1,000	Energy & Commerce (Chair), CHC
Chuck Fleischmann	R	TN	2024	\$1,000	Appropriations; Science
Daniel Newhouse	R	WA	2024	\$1,000	Agriculture; Appropriations
David Valadao	R	CA	2024	\$1,000	Appropriations
Frank Pallone, Jr.	D	NJ	2024	\$3,500	Energy & Commerce (Ranking); CHC
Glenn Thompson	R	PA	2024	\$2,500	Agriculture (Chair); Education & Workforce
Gus Bilirakis	R	FL	2024	\$1,000	Energy & Commerce
Hakeem Jeffries	D	NY	2024	\$5,000	House Minority Leader
James Comer	R	KY	2024	\$2,500	Education; Oversight (Chair)
Jimmy Panetta	D	CA	2024	\$2,500	Budget; Ways & Means
Joe Neguse	D	CO	2024	\$1,000	Judiciary; Natural Resources; Rules;
Josh Gottheimer	D	NJ	2024	\$3,500	Financial Services
Marcus Molinaro	R	NY	2024	\$1,000	Small Business and Administration
Michael Lawler	R	NY	2024	\$1,000	Foreign Affairs; Financial Services;
Morgan McGarvey	D	KY	2024	\$5,000	Budget; Small Business; Veterans' Affairs
Paul Tonko	D	NY	2024	\$5,000	Budget; Energy & Commerce; CHC Co-Chair
Richard Neal	D	MA	2024	\$5,000	Ways & Means; Taxation
Tom Cole	R	OK	2024	\$2,500	Appropriations (Chair)
<b>TOTAL House of Representatives</b>				<b>\$56,500</b>	

## 2024 HORSE PAC® DISBURSEMENTS

### United States Senate

Senate	Party	State	Re-election Year	2024 Disbursed	Committees
Kirsten Gillibrand	D	NY	2024	\$5,000	Appropriations; Armed Services; Intelligence
NRSC	R	US	n/a	\$15,000	
Todd Young	R	IN	2028	\$5,000	Commerce; Finance; Intelligence; Small Business
Tommy Tuberville	R	AL	2026	\$1,000	Agriculture; Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
<b>TOTAL Senate</b>				<b>\$26,000</b>	

## 2024 HORSE PAC® DISBURSEMENTS

### Federal Leadership PACs

Associated Candidate	Party	State	Re-election Year	2024 Actual Leadership PAC	Committees
Alex Padilla	D	CA	2028	\$2,500	Budget; Energy; Environment; Judiciary; Rules
Andy Barr	R	KY	2024	\$5,000	Financial Services; Foreign Affairs
Bob Casey	D	DC	2024	\$2,500	Finance
Charles Schumer	D	NY	2028	\$5,000	Senate Minority Leader; Rules & Administration
John Boozman	R	AR	2028	\$5,000	Agriculture (Chair); Appropriations; Environment; Rules; Veterans' Affairs
John Thune	R	SD	2028	\$5,000	Senate Majority Leader; Agriculture; Commerce; Finance
Marco Rubio	R	FL	2028	\$2,000	Appropriations ;Foreign Relations; Small Business
Mike Johnson	R	LA	2024	\$5,000	Speaker of the House
Mitch McConnell	R	KY	2026	\$5,000	Agriculture; Appropriations; Rules (Chair)
Morgan McGarvey	D	KY	2024	\$5,000	Budget; Small Business; Veterans' Affairs
Pete Ricketts	R	NE	2026	\$7,500	Banking; Budget; Environment; Foreign Relations
Rand Paul	R	KY	2028	\$2,500	Foreign Relations; Homeland Security (Chair); Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions; Small Business
Steve Scalise	R	LA	2024	\$2,500	House Majority Leader
Todd Young	R	IN	2028	\$5,000	Commerce; Finance; Intelligence; Small Business
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>\$59,500</b>	

**Leadership PACs** enable politicians to donate to other candidates, thereby building relationships with their peers. These relationships are critical to Members of Congress who may be seeking a leadership position in Congress, a higher office, or greater leverage within their own party as they demonstrate their fund-raising ability. Candidates who form Leadership PACs are signaling their intent to build their political influence. Leadership PACs also provide a way for candidates to fund their travel, office expenses, consultants, polling and other non-campaign expenses.



## 2024 HORSE PAC® DISBURSEMENTS BY COMMITTEE

Most Horse PAC®-supported candidates serve on one or more committees that oversee the industry. The following is a list of key committees for racing and the candidates on those committees that Horse PAC® supported in 2024. Additionally, the PAC supports candidates who understand racing's issues, have racetracks and other racing-related industries in their districts, serve in leadership roles, are members of Congressional caucuses important to our industry or are emerging leaders meriting early support. Candidates are evaluated on their individual merits.

### Key Congressional Committees for the Thoroughbred Industry

Committee	House/Senate	Issue(s)
Agriculture	House and Senate	Livestock, equine identification, Farm Bill
Appropriations	House and Senate	Bills serve as vehicles for other provisions
Banking	Senate	Internet gaming
Commerce, Science & Transportation	Senate	Interstate Horseracing Act; general oversight for professional sports, including medication issues
Education & Labor	House and Senate	Worker health and safety; job training; employer/employee relations
Energy & Commerce	House	Horseracing Integrity and Safety Act ; Interstate Horseracing Act; general oversight for professional sports, including medication issues
Finance	Senate	Taxes and trade
Financial Services	House	Internet gaming
Homeland Security	House and Senate	Security for major racing events; anti-terrorism measures affecting consumers; immigration
Judiciary	House and Senate	Internet gaming, immigration
Ways & Means	House	Taxes and trade

## 2024 HORSE PAC® COMMITTEE NUMBERS

### AGRICULTURE

#### Agriculture Committee (House of Representatives)

- 54 Members/25 Democrats, 29 Republicans

Through their re-elect campaigns, in 2024 Horse PAC® supported two members of the House Agriculture Committee: Marcus Molinaro (R-NY) and Committee Chairman Glenn “GT” Thompson (R-PA).

#### Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry (Senate)

- 23 Members/12 Democrats, 11 Republicans

Through their re-elect campaigns and/or Leadership PACs, in 2024, Horse PAC® supported five members of the Senate Agriculture Committee: John Boozman (R-AR), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Mitch McConnell (R-KY), John Thune (R-SD), and Tommy Tuberville (R-AL).

### APPROPRIATIONS

#### Appropriations (House of Representatives)

- 61 Members/27 Democrats, 34 Republicans

Through their re-elect campaigns and/or Leadership PACs, in 2024 Horse PAC® supported two members of the House Appropriations Committee: Committee Chairman Tom Cole (R-OK), and San Newhouser (R-VA).

#### Appropriations (Senate)

- 29 Members/15 Democrats, 14 Republicans

Through their re-elect campaigns and/or Leadership PACs, in 2024 Horse PAC® supported three members of the Senate Appropriations Committee: John Boozman (R-AR), Mitch McConnell (R-KY), and Marco Rubio (R-FL).

### BANKING

#### Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs (Senate)

- 23 Members/12 Democrats, 11 Republicans

In 2024 Horse PAC® supported no members of the Senate Banking Committee.

## 2024 HORSE PAC® COMMITTEE NUMBERS

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### COMMERCE

#### Energy and Commerce Committee (House of Representatives)

- 52 Members/23 Democrats, 29 Republicans

Through their re-elect campaigns and/or Leadership PACs, in 2024 Horse PAC® supported four members of the House Energy and Commerce Committee: Gus Bilirakis (R-FL), Brett Guthrie (R-KY), Ranking Member Frank Pallone (D-NJ), and Paul Tonko (D-NY).

#### Commerce, Science and Transportation (Senate)

- 27 Members/14 Democrats, 13 Republicans

Through their re-elect campaigns and/or Leadership PACs, in 2024 Horse PAC® supported one member of the Senate Commerce Committee: John Thune (R-SD).

### FINANCE

#### Finance Committee (Senate)

- 27 Members/14 Democrats, 13 Republicans

Through their re-elect campaigns and/or Leadership PACs, in 2024 Horse PAC® supported three members of the Senate Finance Committee: Bob Casey (D-PA), John Thune (R-SD), and Todd Young (R-IN).

### FINANCIAL SERVICES

#### Financial Services (House of Representatives)

- 52 Members/23 Democrats, 29 Republicans

Through their re-elect campaigns and/or Leadership PACs, in 2024 Horse PAC® supported three members of the House Financial Services Committee: Andy Barr (R-KY), Andrew Garbarino (R-NY), and Josh Gottheimer (D-NJ).

### HOMELAND SECURITY

#### Homeland Security (House of Representatives)

- 33 Members/15 Democrats, 18 Republicans

Through their re-elect campaigns and/or Leadership PACs, in 2024 Horse PAC® supported two members of the House Homeland Security Committee: Anthony D'Esposito (R-NV) and Andrew Garbarino (R-NY).

## 2024 HORSE PAC® COMMITTEE NUMBERS

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#### Homeland Security and Government Affairs (Senate)

- 14 Members/6 Democrats, 7 Republicans, 1 Independent

Through their re-elect campaigns and/or Leadership PACs, in 2024 Horse PAC® supported one member of the Senate Homeland Security Committee: Ranking Member Rand Paul (R-KY).

### JUDICIARY

#### Judiciary Committee (House of Representatives)

- 44 Members/25 Republicans, 19 Democrats

Through their re-elect campaigns and/or Leadership PACs, in 2024 Horse PAC® supported one member of the House Judiciary Committee: Joe Neguse (D-CO).

#### Judiciary Committee (Senate)

- 21 Members/11 Democrats, 10 Republicans

Through his Leadership PAC, in 2024 Horse PAC® supported one member of the Senate Judiciary Committee: Alex Padilla (D-CA).

### LABOR

#### Education & The Workforce (House of Representatives)

- 45 Members/20 Democrats, 25 Republicans

Through their re-elect campaigns and/or Leadership PACs, in 2024 Horse PAC® supported two members of the House Education & The Workforce Committee: James Comer (R-KY) and Glenn "GT" Thompson (R-PA).

#### Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (Senate)

- 21 Members/11 Democrats, 10 Republicans

Through their re-elect campaigns and/or Leadership PACs, in 2024 Horse PAC® supported one member of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions: Tommy Tuberville (R-AL).

### SMALL BUSINESS

#### Committee on Small Business (House of Representatives)

- 27 Members/12 Democrats, 15 Republicans

Through his re-elect campaign and Leadership PAC, in 2024 Horse PAC® supported one member of the House Committee on Small Business: Morgan McGarvey (D-KY).

## 2024 HORSE PAC® COMMITTEE NUMBERS

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### Committee on Small Business & Entrepreneurship (Senate)

- 19 Members/10 Democrats, 9 Republicans

Through his re-elect campaign and Leadership PAC, in 2024 Horse PAC® supported two members of the Senate Committee on Small Business & Entrepreneurship: Marco Rubio (R-FL) and Todd Young (R-IN).

### **WAYS AND MEANS**

#### Ways and Means (House of Representatives)

- 43 Members/18 Democrats, 25 Republicans

Through their re-elect campaigns and/or Leadership PACs, in 2024 Horse PAC® supported two members of the House Ways and Means Committee: Ranking Member Richard E. Neal (D-MA), and Jimmy Panetta (D-CA).

### **HOUSE AND SENATE LEADERSHIP**

Horse PAC® supports candidates who serve in leadership capacities within their respective parties. Through their re-elect campaigns and/or Leadership PACs, in 2024 Horse PAC® supported the following House and Senate leaders:

#### House

Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY), Minority Leader

#### Senate

Mitch McConnell (R-KY), Minority Leader

Charles Schumer (D-NY), Majority Leader

John Thune (R-SD), Minority Whip

## 2025 OUTLOOK

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We find ourselves at an interesting time – the beginning of a presidential and congressional term. As such, not much has happened yet. The biggest accomplishment so far has been keeping the government funded for the summer. But that doesn't mean nothing will happen. In fact, this first year will very likely be the busiest of the next two. Republicans currently have slim majorities in the House and Senate, and hold the Presidency, so they will be looking to pass as much on their agenda as possible before the midterm elections, which are notorious for hurting the party of the sitting President.

First on their list is creating and passing a tax package, and other items include the Farm Bill, and securing more government funding later in the year. As previously mentioned, the margins for Republicans are very small – currently 218-213 in the House (with four vacancies to fill) and 53-47 in the Senate – which means every vote will be a tightrope and require help from Democrats specifically in the Senate.

The tax package and Farm Bill present major opportunities for the NTRA to advance the ideas that are most important and helpful to the Thoroughbred industry. Our allies in the House and Senate are already hard at work on both sides of the aisle, which means the NTRA is well-prepared to consistently champion the best interests of our sport in the new legislative term.

## 2024 LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY

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As the representative organization for the Thoroughbred industry, the NTRA directs its lobbying efforts toward legislation that significantly impacts its members and their business engagements in the realms of horse racing, breeding, and pari-mutuel wagering. Additionally, the NTRA advocates for Congressional education initiatives addressing broader issues like agriculture and immigration, which have implications for the entire horse industry. The following outlines key legislative matters pertinent to Thoroughbred breeding and racing during the 118th and 119th Congresses.

**Election Results.** Donald Trump secured victory in the presidential election and began his second term in 2025. Republicans also gained the majority in the Senate by flipping four seats previously held by Democrats in West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Montana, and Ohio, resulting in a 53-47 split. In the House of Representatives, Republicans retained control, but by a very slim margin. With President Trump's inauguration, he leads a government aligned with his party's legislative priorities. A key focus for this new Congress will be advancing a comprehensive tax package using the reconciliation process, which enables passage with a simple majority in both chambers. With Republicans in control of the presidency and both chambers of Congress, we can expect progress on provisions from the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 that have expired or are set to lapse. A significant area of interest for our industry is the future of Bonus Depreciation, which is anticipated to be a primary focus of legislative efforts and is expected to be included in any package moving forward. In addition, a notable leadership change, Senator Mitch McConnell will no longer serve as the leader of the Senate Republicans next Congress, marking the end of an era for the first time since 2007. McConnell has been a strong ally to our industry, but the NTRA is well positioned to work effectively with his successor, Senator John Thune of South Dakota, as we navigate the legislative landscape ahead.

**Supreme Court Temporarily Upholds HISA Rules Amid Legal Battle.** On October 29, 2024, the U.S. Supreme Court granted a temporary stay on a mandate from the Fifth Circuit Court concerning the constitutionality of the Horseracing Integrity and Safety Authority (HISA). This move ensures that HISA's rules remain in effect across most U.S. racing jurisdictions for the time being.

The stay, requested by HISA and its supporters, raises the likelihood that the Supreme Court will review constitutional challenges from the Fifth and Sixth Circuits. While both appellate courts upheld HISA's rule-making authority, the Fifth Circuit found its enforcement powers unconstitutional under the non-delegation doctrine. This doctrine prohibits Congress from granting excessive regulatory authority to non-government entities.

NTRA expects the Supreme Court to schedule a hearing by fall 2025.

## 2024 LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY

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**Immigration.** The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced a final rule that will enable U.S. companies in need of seasonal workers to fill those positions more quickly and efficiently. The rule is designed to modernize and improve the H-2 nonimmigrant visa programs, which allow qualified U.S. employers unable to find sufficient U.S. workers to petition for foreign nationals to fill temporary or seasonal agricultural and nonagricultural jobs.

The final rule eliminates the requirement for USCIS to approve petitions for H-2 nonimmigrant status only for nationals of designated eligible countries, removing the need for DHS to compile and publish annual country lists. It also simplifies the rules regarding the 3-year maximum stay period by eliminating "interrupted" stay provisions and introducing a uniform 60-day absence period to reset the 3-year clock.

The final rule also introduces new grace periods and harmonizes existing ones. Specifically, it:

- Adds a 60-day grace period following the cessation of employment, allowing workers to seek new qualifying employment or prepare for departure without violating their status.

- Extends the current 30-day grace period after certain revocations to up to 60 days, covering all revocations of H-2 petition approvals.

- Confirms that H-2 workers maintain status for up to 10 days before the petition's validity period and up to 30 days after its expiration.

The rule also establishes "portability," enabling eligible H-2 workers to begin employment with a new employer immediately after the proper filing of an extension of stay petition, without waiting for its approval. Furthermore, it clarifies that H-2 workers will not be deemed to have failed to maintain their status or denied H-2 classification solely for taking steps toward lawful permanent residency in the United States.

**NTRA Endorses Key Legislative Efforts.** The National Thoroughbred Racing Association endorsed three key pieces of legislation aimed at bolstering investment, financial certainty, and long-term growth in the equine industry. These measures—the Accelerate Long-term Investment Growth Now (ALIGN) Act, the Racehorse Cost Recovery Act, and the Racehorse Tax Parity Act—represent critical advancements for the Thoroughbred breeding and racing sector and the broader equine economy.

The ALIGN Act, introduced in the House of Representatives by Congressman Jodey Arrington (R-TX), permanently sets the applicable percentage for bonus depreciation at 100%. This is a vital provision for the Thoroughbred industry, as it incentivizes

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investment, boosts demand at sales, and provides financial certainty for breeders, owners, and buyers. By ensuring long-term depreciation benefits, this legislation will promote reinvestment across the industry while strengthening jobs in farming, training, veterinary care, and other equine-related businesses. The NTRA strongly supports the ALIGN Act as a fundamental measure to maintain the economic vitality of Thoroughbred racing.

Reintroduced by Congressmen Andy Barr (R-KY) and Morgan McGarvey (D-KY) the Racehorse Cost Recovery Act seeks to make the three-year depreciation schedule permanent for yearlings. Previously, Congress had renewed this tax provision annually, but it has remained expired since 2021. Establishing a permanent three-year depreciation schedule will eliminate uncertainty for owners and investors, fostering sustained growth in the Thoroughbred sector.

Also introduced by Congressmen Barr and McGarvey, the Racehorse Tax Parity Act addresses inequities in the tax code by reducing the holding period for equine assets to qualify as long-term capital gains. This change would align the tax treatment of racehorses with other similar assets, ensuring that investors in the equine industry receive fair and consistent tax benefits.

**Sports Betting.** Since the 2018 Supreme Court decision that overturned the federal ban on sports betting, the industry has rapidly expanded across the United States. Today, 38 states have legalized sports betting, with 30 also allowing mobile betting. In 2023 alone, Americans wagered a record \$119.84 billion on sports, marking a 27% increase from the previous year. Senator Richard Blumenthal and Congressman Paul Tonko have raised concerns about the public health impacts associated with its widespread legalization. In response, they introduced the SAFE Bet Act, aimed at establishing nationwide consumer protections and standards for the mobile sports gambling industry.

While the SAFE Bet Act was well-intentioned, the National Thoroughbred Racing Association has expressed concerns about its potential repercussions on the horse racing industry's established betting infrastructure. The NTRA believes that introducing new federal standards for sports betting could interfere with existing operations and inadvertently harm regulated betting programs tied to horse racing.

The NTRA is also monitoring Sports Events Trading – a potential new form of sports gambling that may be a backdoor way to introduce sports betting to all 50 states.

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**VA Equine Funding Headed to Senate.** On June 5, 2024, the House of Representatives passed H.R.8580 - Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2025, with a vote of 209-197. This bill includes an initiative led by Congressman Andy Barr (R-KY) and the National Thoroughbred Racing Association (NTRA) to allocate up to \$5 million in grants for equine therapy under the Veterans Affairs (VA) Adaptive Sports Program. The VA will award these grants to eligible organizations to plan, develop, manage, and implement equine therapy programs for veterans and Armed Forces members with disabilities. The NTRA will now focus on ensuring this provision remains intact.

Horse PAC®, the Federal Political Action Committee (PAC) of the National Thoroughbred Racing Association, was activated to support Federal elected officials who are interested in issues that affect pari-mutuel horse racing. Contributions to Horse PAC® are accepted from NTRA members only. Contributions from outside this restricted class will be returned to the contributor. As an NTRA member, you can choose to participate in the PAC or decline. The NTRA will not favor or disfavor members according to donations. Suggested contribution amounts are merely a suggestion. Members should feel free to contribute more – up to the legal maximum of \$5,000 per year – or less than the suggested contribution, or not at all. Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, and occupation and the name of the employer of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 in a calendar year. Contributions to Horse PAC® will be used to support or oppose candidates for public office. Contributions to Horse PAC® are not tax-deductible.

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