

**NAACP Jefferson County**

**P.O. Box 411**

**Ranson, WV 25438**

Jefferson County NAACP strongly supports the Charles Town Horsemen Benevolent Protection Agency (CTHBPA)' resolution in relation to maintaining and adequately providing for year round live thoroughbred racing in Jefferson County.

The branch is gravely concerned about the action taken by the West Virginia legislature in 2014. In 2005, the Workers' Compensation Debt Reduction Fund was established. This action reduced the percentage of revenue going to horsemen's purses by \$11 million per year and applied it to the state's workers' compensation debt fund. Up to 2014 this bill reduced the local horsemen's purses by nearly \$60 million. A provision in the original bill stipulated that whenever the workers' compensation debt was paid in its entirety, the annual \$11 million appropriated would revert back to the purse fund. However, in the first special session of the 2014 legislature this provision was changed and deemed to expire, and language was inserted to subject roughly half of all previously allocated purse monies to appropriation. This action has had a devastating effect on the racing industry in Jefferson County.

Beside the horsemen, the branch is concerned about the economic loss and its impact in the community, such as: increased unemployment, increased homelessness, decreased real estate rental and sales, decreased tourism, increased taxes, decreased farmer income. In general, the entire community will be negatively impacted and will suffer.

As president of the NAACP, I have personally met with the hard working men and women that work in the stable area, the betting area, the parking area, also the owners, trainers, farmers, merchants and others. They are all seriously concerned as to what will happen to their livelihood if racing is reduced and/or closed.

The branch is requesting that the county and the local municipal governments request that our state legislators use whatever means necessary to repeal the action taken by the 2014 legislature and the funding returned to the horsemen's purses.

Also, we request the public to support the continuance of year round thoroughbred racing in Jefferson County by signing the online resolution. ([www.petitionbuzz.com/petitions/support-thoroughbred-racing](http://www.petitionbuzz.com/petitions/support-thoroughbred-racing)).

The future of racing affects all of us in the county. We cannot afford to lose it.

George Rutherford  
President