**Back British Racing and #AxeTheRacingTax**

As a follower and supporter of British horseracing based in your constituency, I am writing to you to express my deep concern around a measure proposed by the Treasury that risks irreparably damaging the industry and thousands of livelihoods it supports nationwide.

British horseracing is a cherished national institution and world leading industry. For centuries it has been deeply embedded in our national consciousness in a way unlike any other sport. From the first recorded race in Newmarket in 1622, British racing has grown and evolved to earn iconic and world-leading status. However, the sport now faces a triple whammy of public policy threats, and without considered intervention from the Government, it risks falling into critical decline.

The recently announced Treasury consultation on the tax treatment of online gambling presents an immediate existential danger. It proposes harmonising three existing duties into a new, single Remote Betting & Gaming Duty. This change would cause huge harm to British racing.

As you may know, racing has a uniquely symbiotic relationship with betting. The Horserace Betting Levy (the Levy), paid by bookmakers on their profits, is the central funding mechanism for the sport funding prize money, jobs, equine welfare, and veterinary research. Reductions in income received from gambling will significantly harm the financial viability of racing. As such, duty harmonisation could be devastating.

Proposed measures that would tax horserace bets at the same rate as online slot machines will make horseracing a significantly more expensive product for betting operators. In turn, they will be incentivised to promote betting on cheaper online slots and casinos, which do not offer the same social benefits as racing, offer no cultural value and have higher levels of harm.

Less promotion of racing will in turn result in decreased racing betting turnover and reduce the

amount of money flowing into the sport through the Horserace Betting Levy. A duty harmonised at 21% will cost online operators around £40m in extra taxation on racing, with cost-cutting measures such as increased margins (to the disadvantage of recreational bettors) and a reduction in customer offers sure to follow. This will have a forecast indirect impact on racing of £66m with almost 1000 jobs lost.

This is just one part of a triple whammy of problems for an industry that is already under significant financial strain. In 2024 racing secured a modest Levy increase intended to stabilise its finances. But its implementation was halted by the general election and subsequent negotiations have stalled. Meanwhile, affordability checks on bettors introduced in advance of – and since – the 2023 Gambling White Paper have led to a £1.6 billion decline in online betting turnover on racing over the past two years, further eroding the sport’s economic viability.

Today, British horseracing contributes £4.1 billion a year to the UK economy, generates £300 million in tax revenue, and supports 85,000 jobs nationwide.

Beyond its economic value, racing is also a source of immense local pride for communities across Britain – from cities and towns to rural areas. Nearly five million spectators visit our 59 racecourses each year, making it the country’s second best-attended sport.

Horseracing and betting on horseracing is a thoroughly enjoyable pastime for millions in this country from the once-a-week punter to the more sophisticated regular, larger bettor and is risk-free to the huge majority.

I would be grateful for your support through raising these issues in Parliament

and by writing to the Prime Minister and Treasury Ministers to urge them to back British racing

and #AxeTheRacingTax. If they do not, they will be damaging a vital national institution, economic contributor and source of national pride.

Thank you, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely, [Name and address]