



Endorsement of the adoption of the Betting Duty (Amendment) Bill 2013

Haider Kikabhoy

to:

立法會CB(2)1174/12-13(11)號文件

LC Paper No. CB(2)1174/12-13(11)

20/05/2013 15:54

Hide Details

From: Haider Kikabhoy

Please respond to Haider Kikabhoy

To: the Bills Committee on Betting Duty (Amendment) Bill 2013

I am a Hong Kong citizen, and I am writing to endorse the adoption of the Betting Duty (Amendment) Bill 2013.

Commingling in horse racing has been long overdue in Hong Kong. Commingling will keep betting revenues away from illegal bookmakers. It is an effective way to stop these individuals and organisations from harvesting the Hong Kong Jockey Club's hard and good work – much of which is charitable – by conducting arbitrage bets. It will help combat illegal gambling and keep the business model of Hong Kong horse racing viable and sustainable. The sustainability of the local horse racing industry is vitally important to the quality of Hong Kong horse racing, and to the careers and livelihoods of thousands of equine professionals in this city, from trainers and jockeys to mafoos and off-course betting centre workers. That sustainability is now under threat, however, not least because of global economic uncertainties.

It is understandable that concern has been raised as to whether the amendment will increase betting opportunities and hence potentially lead to more instances of excessive gambling. However, while the size of the betting pools will increase as a result of commingling, it does not necessarily imply increased dividends for bettors for the simple reason that Hong Kong horse race betting follows the pari-mutuel format. What is certain though is that commingling will help create more stable odds, which is beneficial to racing fans. More importantly, larger pools can generate higher turnovers to the government in the form of profits tax on non-local bets, and this is no small matter when the source concerned is Hong Kong's single biggest taxpayer.

Already one of the most valuable brands and products of this city, Hong Kong horse racing is now among the best in the world, a status which was confirmed once again when two local gallopers won Singapore's two most prestigious races last Sunday (19 May). Commingling will help Hong Kong further export this brand and create value to the economy as well as to the community. With commingling, more racing fans overseas will be attracted to Hong Kong horse racing, which will help bring more top quality horses, trainers and jockeys to the city, and take the sport to an even higher level.

The substantial benefits of commingling speak for themselves. As a racing fan, I expect the wise members of this Council to approve the Betting Duty (Amendment) Bill 2013 without further delay. Thank you.

Yours faithfully,
Haider Kikabhoy