

Dear Mr. Speaker:

In accordance with Article II, Section 17 of the Maryland Constitution, I have today vetoed House Bill 432.

This bill affects the 48 additional racing dates which the Maryland Racing Commission may award to the Pimlico, Bowie, and Laurel race tracks. The bill prohibits the Commission from awarding more than 16 of these additional 48 dates of racing to any single track in any year. This prohibition is effective January 1, 1979.

Regardless of my action on this legislation, I am informed that the 48 additional dates will be run at Pimlico this summer and that, in the summer of 1979, none of those additional days will be run at Pimlico. Therefore, as a practical matter, the bill will have no effect upon the summer racing schedule at Pimlico for these two years.

I object to the fact that this bill withdraws from the Racing Commission the ability to deal with the allocation of discretionary racing dates. I believe that the Commission should be able to award racing dates administratively. I do not believe that a statute should either require or prohibit the allocation of racing dates. That decision should be left to the agency which was created by the General Assembly for such purposes.

The award of these 48 dates can be done administratively, whether on a triennial rotation of the entire 48 dates, or, as House Bill 432 seems to suggest, by annually awarding 16 dates to each of the three affected tracks. I intend to speak with the members of the Maryland Racing Commission in this regard.

I agree with the sponsors of this bill that it is unfair to the residents of the neighborhoods surrounding any of these three tracks to be burdened with the inconveniences which may be attendant upon a full 48-day meet more than once in a triennial cycle. I believe that the Commission administratively can alleviate such problems by awarding the dates by either of the alternative methods I have described.

Because House Bill 432 will not affect the 1978 or 1979 schedule at Pimlico, and for the reasons given for preferring the awarding of racing dates administratively, I have decided to veto House Bill 432.

Sincerely,
Blair Lee III
Acting Governor
