Senator Sherrod Brown

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Senator Robert “Rob” Portman

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Via E-mail Only: [Sarah\_Peery@portman.senate.gov](mailto:Sarah_Peery@portman.senate.gov)

Re.: Please Act, Ohio Horsemen Opposed to S. 4547 December \_\_\_\_, 2020

I am a full-time Ohio standardbred horseman in the Nations’ Number One harness racing state, Ohio. We race at 4 pari-mutuel Racetracks and 66 County Fairs on a yearly basis. I am a part of the fabric and landscape of Ohio as a small business owner in the agricultural sector. My business is about supporting statewide agriculture in Ohio, I am a part of the grass roots agricultural impact Standardbred racing has statewide.

I appeal to you to protect my interests in a year that was very difficult for agricultural businesses and small businesses alike. My harness racing business lost two months of revenue due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While incurring that loss, I continue to fully support my equine athletes and Ohio employees to the best of my ability. A horse racing business is time and labor intensive, which requires a lot of direct time with the horses. We cannot easily reduce our workforce in response to supply and demand as many other businesses can, horses demand full-time care regardless of shut-down or scaled back resumption. Due to these issues, my business still has not fully recovered. While I understand the pandemic has taken a toll on all businesses, especially small businesses, it is more expensive and difficult to operate with the added safety restrictions in a lower-margin agricultural business that relies heavily on labor.

S. 4547 on its own will add a “tax” to my business that cannot be calculated. We simply cannot afford to be taxed in addition to our already high costs for doing business. Tacking S. 4547 in its current form onto much needed COVID-19 financial relief, without fair and honest debate is simply unfair. Without considering the standardbred racing industry as a business very different from other racing breeds and disciplines, passing the Bill now will have a disastrous effect my small business already in distress due to the COVID-19 pandemic and economy.

We have been informed that Senate Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) wants to integrate S. 4547 into a bi-partisan COVID-19 relief bill, a government funding Bill or both within the next two weeks. We are asking you to stop anything that could slip passage by without honest discussion.

As one of Ohio’s statewide Horsemen and a fellow Ohioan, I request that you intervene on behalf of Ohio’s statewide agribusinesses, oppose this legislation, and do whatever is necessary to ensure it remains as a standalone Bill to be considered, debated, and decided upon the merits.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter I am happy to discuss with you directly by phone or e-mail at any time.

Sincerely,