

Legislative Profile: Anthony Portantino

Assembly member Anthony Portantino represents the 44th Assembly District, which includes the city of Arcadia and Santa Anita Park.

The youngest of four children, Portantino was born in Long Branch, New Jersey. It was there that he first fell in love with horseracing, where as a child, he would listen to his older brother tell the story of Stage Door Johnny winning the Belmont Stakes. Every year, the Portantino family would spend their Fourth of July at Monmouth Park where they would picnic as the horses ran by. As Portantino got a bit older, his grandfather let him in on the secret to picking the winning horse; he stressed the importance of taking a trip to the Paddock before the race to see which horse would wink at him. Portantino remembers with a smile that it was the horse that winked that would win.

Portantino first came to California to pursue a career in the entertainment industry and spent many years working in film and TV production. He eventually entered public service, spending seven years on the La Cañada-Flintridge City Council, two terms as mayor of that city, as well as several assignments on local and statewide boards. Upon his election to the city council, Portantino attended the La Cañada Handicap at Santa Anita, where he was proud to stand in the winners' circle.

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guished himself as a potential leader for the horse racing industry. As a freshman member of the Assembly Government Organization Committee, his 2007 legislative agenda includes a measure to eliminate the sunset on Advance Deposit Wagering (AB 813), which is essential to the long term health of the industry.

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Education is another one of Portantino's priorities. As Chair of the Higher Education Committee, Portantino will direct the Assembly's legislative policy related to community colleges, state colleges, and the UC system. Portantino also serves on the Assembly Transportation Committee, where he hopes to help manage the infrastructure investments made possible through the recent passage of major California transportation bonds, and to craft solutions to a host of other pressing transportation problems.

When he is not concentrating on his legislative duties, Portantino enjoys life with his wife Ellen and their two daughters, Sofia and Bella Rose, who are 15 and 5 years old, respectively. Frequently, that includes a family trip to the racetrack, where it's possible for him to relive some of his childhood memories.