

## Legislative Profile: Alberto Torrico

Alberto Torrico was interested in horse racing long before he was selected to chair the Assembly Committee on Governmental Organization. One of his first bills to become law, AB 1180 of 2005, established procedures for improved jockey safety and working conditions in the horse racing industry.

When Torrico introduced the bill in February 2005, it was opposed by some racing interests. But the *Fremont Democrat* worked hard to respond to their concerns. The bill ultimately passed both houses of the Legislature with broad bipartisan support. By the time it reached Gov. Schwarzenegger, it had no official opposition.

"I applaud the effort and creativity of all stakeholders in reaching a consensus in support of this bill," Torrico told his Assembly colleagues. The new law was signed by the governor and took effect on Jan. 1, 2006.

Torrico hopes to bring the same spirit of inclusion and bipartisan cooperation to his new position as chair of the committee with jurisdiction over the horse racing industry.

"I recognize that horse racing is not just a sport but also an agribusiness that employs more than 50,000 people and is an essential part of California's economy," Torrico said.

Torrico, whose district includes the Tri-Cities of Fremont, Newark and Union City in Alameda County, as well as Milpitas and part of San Jose



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in Santa Clara County, recognizes the importance of California's racing industry and its appeal both to bettors and to people who simply admire the athleticism of the jockeys and the horses, the scenic beauty of the tracks, and the thrill of live competition.

"I am a big supporter of horse racing," he said. "I want to help to find ways to revitalize this industry and enable this great sport to be enjoyed by generations to come."

To do so, Torrico wants to explore tools to generate new interest in racing. Ideas under consideration include flexible takeout, propositional wagering, more satellite wagering facilities, and possible customer rebates.

Torrico recognizes the challenges faced by the industry in an environment of increased competition from other states and other forms of legal gaming. He believes full and competitive fields are the best tool to market the sport, and will seek ways to increase purses, keep horses in California, and build larger fields for customers to wager on.

"It's been disappointing to see the declining handle and attendance at California's racetracks in recent years," he said. "I will work to achieve a level playing field in which racing has a fair chance to compete. I want to reverse this decline and ensure that future generations will have the opportunity to enjoy this magnificent sport."

## TOC Hosts Legislators at Cal Cup

Annually TOC hosts California state and U.S. legislators at Oak Tree for the California Cup, and did so again October 28. TOC Chairman Alan Landsburg, Directors Barry Abrams, Madeline Auerbach, Dave Hofmans, and Billy Koch, President Drew Couto, and Legislative Consultant David Helmsin joined legislators and members for lunch and an afternoon of racing in the FrontRunner Restaurant, and at the Infield party. It was an enjoyable day of racing for all!

TOC again co-sponsored the Matron with California Thoroughbred Trainers, and dedicated all purse revenues generated on the day to offset Cal Cup purses. Special congratulations to owners Jerry Hollendorfer, Charles Miller, John Sikura, and George Todaro, whose Somethinaboutlaura blazed to a four-length victory in the \$100,000 Matron



Assemblyman Martin Garrick and his wife Jane (front row, left) were on hand for the presentation of the trophy for the Cal Cup Matron.