

## State and Local

# Senate OKs pari-mutuel betting

Approval from White would set up statewide referendum

AUSTIN (AP) — A bare Senate majority overrode last-minute opposition Monday to approve a bill that would set up a statewide referendum on pari-mutuel betting on horse and dog racing.

"Hot dog, thank you," said Sen. D.H. "Ike" Harris, R-Dallas, who has been pushing pari-mutuel betting since 1973.

Harris' bill, which carried 21

House amendments, would provide for a November 1987 statewide referendum.

If that is approved, 251 of Texas' 254 counties could hold local-option elections on whether to allow horse betting.

The other three counties — Galveston, Nueces and Cameron — could vote on betting on dog racing.

The Senate vote, by voice, sent the

proposal to Gov. Mark White, who has not indicated whether he will sign the measure.

Harris said, "I don't know what his attitude is. I'm told, now, by friends, that he is not against it."

Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby said, however, "I would not be surprised if he (White) would veto the horse racing bill if there is no other result from this session."

Hobby himself has kept the bill alive in the Senate by twice overruling points of error that pari-mutuel wagering was not included on White's agenda for the special legislative session.

White called the 30-day session Aug. 6 to deal with a projected state budget deficit of \$3.5 billion.

He joined Hobby in supporting a tax increase, a move the House has so far rejected.

Asked if the Legislature would have approved horse racing if the state budget was not in trouble, Harris said, "Oh no. I think it was a big factor, I sure do."

After two brief periods of pari-mutuel betting, it was ended by the Legislature in 1937, and strong opposition from churches have blocked its re-enactment.

Already this year, religious leaders have vowed to mobilize their forces again against track betting.

On Monday, Sen. Craig Washington, D-Houston, tried to send the bill to a conference committee to make sure it contains "no tricks," but his motion failed 11-15.

Senate debate focused on what effect possible lawsuits could have, specifically if the courts should decide the Legislature could not rely on a referendum in approving legislation.

Harris said if voters reject pari-mutuel betting in November 1987, "then you're not going to have pari-mutuel."

However, he said, if they vote for it and the referendum is later held to be unconstitutional, local-option elections can proceed.

Washington asked, "What if the referendum is stricken before November 1987... is the act nullified?"

"That's the way I read it," Harris replied.

Harris also said if a city, such as Austin, opposed betting but the issue carried countywide at the local-option election, "a track could not go in at Austin" but could be placed in Travis County.

The bill sent to the governor would establish a racing commission, which would charge application fees ranging from \$2,500 to \$15,000 for three types of racetracks.

Class I tracks would be restricted to the larger counties.

## What's up

### Tuesday

**AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT:** will hold a hot dog picnic at 6 p.m. at Olsen Park. All agricultural education majors are invited. For more information call Gail, 268-0772.

**SADDLE AND SIRLOIN CLUB:** will hold its first meeting of the year at 7 p.m. in 115 Kleberg. All interested students are invited. For more information call 845-4433.

**COMMODORE 128 SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP:** anyone needing information or tutoring for Commodore personal computers is invited to join. For more information call David, 845-8889.

**STUDENT GOVERNMENT:** applications for election commissioner, internal communications chairman and freshman programs now are being accepted in 221 Pavilion. For more information call 845-3051.

### Wednesday

**GREAT COMMISSION STUDENTS:** (formerly A&M Christian Fellowship) will hold a fall kick-off rally with fun and refreshments at 7:30 p.m. in 102 Blocker.

**GRADUATE STUDENT COUNCIL:** will sponsor a workshop for graduate students who are interested in starting or improving a graduate student organization in their department on Sept. 13 from 9 a.m. to noon. The workshop is free and refreshments will be served. For more information call 845-2151 or 845-1151.

**SAILING CLUB:** will meet at 7 p.m. in 302 Rudder. A novice test will be given for new members. For more information call Tim, 696-8642.

**Items for What's Up should be submitted to The Battalion, 216 Reed McDonald, no less than three days prior to desired publication date.**

# Horsebreeders would win if pari-mutuel betting passes

BREHAM (AP) — Dick O'Malley's farm is 70 miles away from the closest possible site of a race track, but he and dozens of other farmers in this scenic German community may be among the big winners if parimutuel betting is approved.

O'Malley raises horses. "The part that the state will get from racing is negligible," said O'Malley, a consulting engineer who has six mares and a variety of younger animals. "The important part is the money spent on stud fees, construction, salaries, and income for agri-businessmen."

Horse breeding is already a

thriving concern in Washington County, one of three regions in Texas where breeders have taken advantage of good weather and favorable terrain to locate in numbers.

Breham, along with North Texas and the Hill Country, will share as much as \$712 million in income from horse farms and related businesses if parimutuel wagering is established, said Andy Welch, a spokesman for the Texas Department of Agriculture.

Citing a report on horse racing, Welch said the off-track ef-

fects of racing would be staggering.

More than 9,000 jobs would be created in industries as varied as ranching, transportation, building horse trailers and horse shoeing, he said.

The three prime breeding regions already have a natural advantage from approval of a pari-mutuel bill because the industry and support facilities are already in place, Washington County extension agent Bill Thane said.

"As tight as dollars are nowadays, it's unlikely someone would start up from scratch just to be near a track," Thane said.

# Lottery vote 'may be delayed'

AUSTIN (AP) — A proposed constitutional amendment that would allow Texans to decide whether they wanted the state to operate a lottery game apparently won't get through the current special session, its House sponsor said Monday.

"We ran out of time," said Rep. Ron Wilson, D-Houston.

The bill received final approval Friday from the Senate on a 21-8 vote.

But Wilson said House rules

would keep it from reaching the House floor before the special legislative session ends Thursday night.

Wilson said he planned to quickly file the bill again if Gov. Mark White calls another special session.

Top legislators Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby and Speaker Gib Lewis said Monday that they expect White to call a second session.

As passed by the Senate, the bill would have let voters in No-

vember decide whether the Texas Constitution should be amended to permit the state to operate a lottery game.

Backers said a lottery would generate an estimated \$680 million for state government by 1991.

Opponents argued that the state of Texas would be sanctioning gambling if it started such a game.

Twenty-two other states currently operate lotteries.

## In Advance

### Rep. Joe Barton to debate challenger Geren at A&M

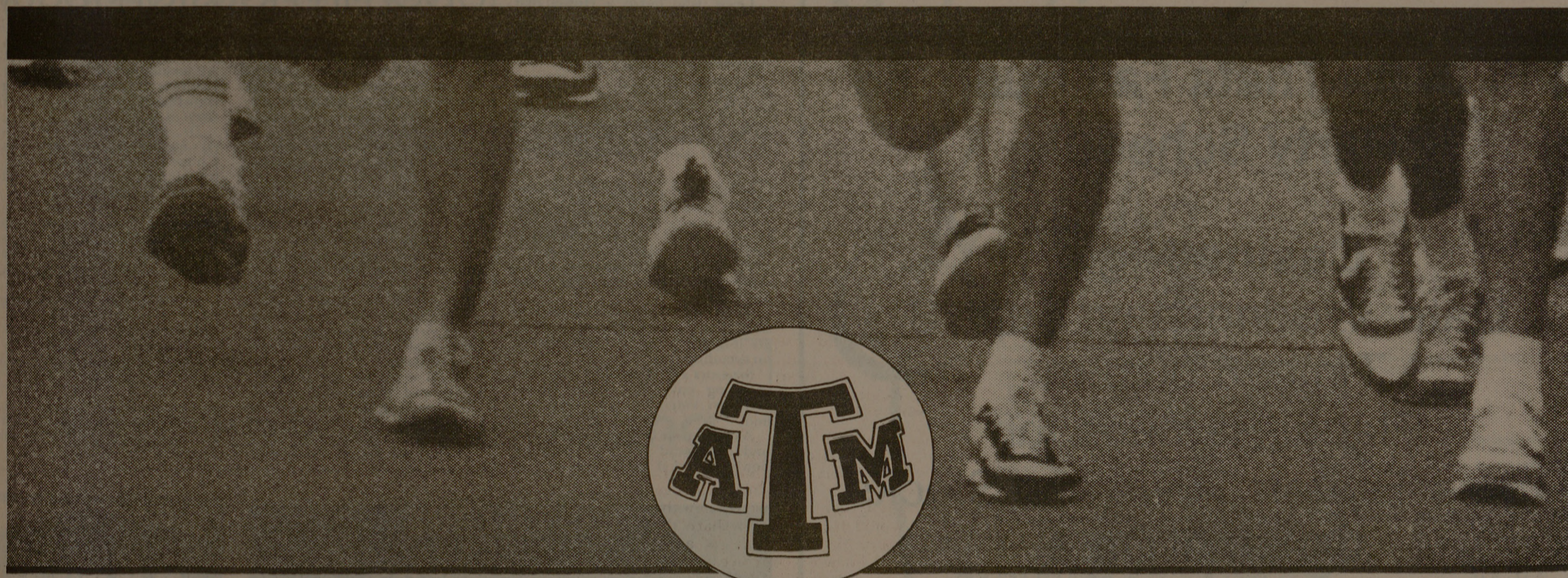
Incumbent 6th District Rep. Joe Barton and Democratic challenger Pete Geren will debate Wednesday at 4:30 p.m. in 301 Rudder Tower.

The event, sponsored by the Memorial Student Center's Political Forum committee, will be the first face-to-face debate between the two congressional candidates.

Derek Blakeley, program director for the debate, said the candidates will be allowed three

minutes each to make opening and closing statements. They also will have three minutes to answer each question posed to them by a four-member panel of Texas A&M student leaders.

Panelists include Mike Sims, student body president; Ross Nethery, state programs director for Political Forum; Chris Eford, president of A&M's Young Democrats; and Mike Hachtman, president of Aggie GOP.



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