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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 251

SHORT TITLE: Horse Racing Program Training & Ownership

SPONSOR: Maestas/Wilson/Ezzell

LAST ORIGINAL
UPDATE: _____ **DATE:** 2/11/2026 **ANALYST:** Montano

REVENUE* (dollars in thousands)

Type	FY26	FY27	FY28	FY29	FY30	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Fines	No fiscal impact	Indeterminate but minimal gain	Recurring	Common School Fund (General Fund)			

Parentheses indicate revenue decreases.
 *Amounts reflect most recent analysis of this legislation.

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT* (dollars in thousands)

Agency/Program	FY26	FY27	FY28	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
SRC	No fiscal impact	Indeterminate but minimal	Indeterminate but minimal		Recurring	General Fund

Parentheses () indicate expenditure decreases.
 *Amounts reflect most recent analysis of this legislation.

Sources of Information

LFC Files

Agency or Agencies Providing Analysis
 State Racing Commission

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Senate Bill 251

Senate Bill 251 (SB251) adds two new definitions and amends the Horse Racing Act to allow the State Racing Commission (SRC) to refuse, suspend, or revoke any licensees or potential licensees that have engaged in program training or have a program owner. SB251 defines program trainer as a “licensed trainer who, solely for the purpose of the official race program, is identified as the trainer of a horse that is actually under the control of and trained by another person who may or may not hold a current trainer's license in any jurisdiction.” It defines program owner as a licensed owner who identifies themselves as the owner of a horse that belongs to an unlicensed person.

This bill does not contain an effective date and, as a result, would go into effect 90 days after the

Legislature adjourns, which is May 20, 2026.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

SRC highlights that the fiscal impact from SB251 is directly related to the total number of program trainers and program owners in New Mexico horse racing. As the number of perpetrators increases, the strain on the agency's operating budget will also increase due to the need for more investigations and disciplinary proceedings. SRC also highlights that there is a right to appeal stewards' rulings to the commission, which would increase the administrative responsibility of the agency's contracted hearings officer.

Additional revenue generated by paid fines from program trainers or program owners would go directly to the common school fund. However, an accurate projection cannot be determined without the total number of program trainers and program owners, so it should be assumed that the enactment of SB251 would generate a minimal but positive amount of revenue.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

SRC raises concerns with program owning and training:

Program owning and training, no matter its frequency, is a scourge on the sport and is essentially defrauding the public. Investigation and administrative prosecution of such practices will add additional work to commission investigators, stewards, and legal staff. In terms of getting cheaters out of horseracing and building and maintaining confidence upon the fans and wagers of horseracing, the addition of program owning and training and the ability to take action against their commission-issued license to the Horse Racing Act is critical.

SRC also notes, "There is the potential that licensees disciplined for program training and/or program owning could face fourth degree felony criminal charges as permitted under Section 60-IA-25 of the Horse Racing Act."

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

From SRC:

The commission already has administrative rules regarding program trainers. However, codifying program trainers and program owners into the Horse Racing Act will give the commission more strength to administratively discipline such individuals, especially the program owners.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

SRC comments:

As with all other disciplinary proceedings, the commission's existing rules on the discipline of licenses and complying with due process requirements are applicable. There may be a need to draft and pass new administrative Rules in light of the new statutory provisions.