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CHRB NEWS RELEASE

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SHAPIRO CLARIFIES POSITION ON JOCKEYS' GUILD

SACRAMENTO, CA – Commissioner Richard Shapiro said Thursday that his comments in a news release issued by the California Horse Racing Board on Wednesday, pertaining to medical claims he forwarded to the Jockeys' Guild, were not intended to pre-judge the underlying issues, and he did not mean to imply that he was favoring one jockeys' organization over another.

"I apologize if it appeared in any way that I was judging the Jockeys' Guild. That was not my intent nor my desire," said Shapiro. "I do believe the Jockeys' Guild is entitled to be judged fairly and not pre-judged before they have an opportunity to look at and resolve the issues.

"My soul motive and intent is to improve the conditions for riders in California, and to make sure their benefits are paid in a timely fashion."

The news release indicated the CHRB had forwarded documentation to the Guild pertaining to 12 cases in which California riders claimed the national organization had not paid covered medical expenses, and that in some cases the matters had gone into collection.

Shapiro clarified his position Thursday by explaining, "Of course, we must hold the jockeys themselves responsible for following the correct procedures and doing what is required of them. Certainly, we won't hold the Guild responsible if the jockeys are not going through the proper procedures, or if doctors are submitting bills that are not appropriate."

The news release also provided updates on two other matters involving California jockeys, including efforts by another organization, the California Jockeys Guild, to develop its own health plan for California jockeys and to seek certification by the Board.

Barry Broad, an attorney representing the national Jockeys' Guild, said in a written communication Thursday that the Guild has fully cooperated with the CHRB and, given a reasonable opportunity, will provide all necessary information relating to the claims. He also indicated that, judging from the news release, Shapiro seemed to endorse the position of one labor organization (the "California Jockeys Guild") over the national Jockeys' Guild.

"I want to apologize if it appeared that I was endorsing the California Guild. That was not my intent," Shapiro said Thursday. "If that was the impression people received, then in retrospect, it would have been better if we had not issued the news release."

CHRB Executive Director Ingrid Fermin said Thursday, “We are committed to hearing and reviewing all aspects of these issues in an impartial manner. Our commitment is to be fair to all concerned.”

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