



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kevin Thomas

## State Lawmakers Announce Landmark Deal to Transform Belmont Park into a World Class Racing Destination

KEVIN THOMAS May 5, 2023

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**(LONG ISLAND, NY)** – Elected officials, community leaders, members of the New York Racing Association (NYRA) and organized labor gathered for Opening Day at Belmont Park to celebrate the historic \$455 million loan enacted in the FY24 New York State Budget earlier this week to build new Thoroughbred racing facilities.

“Horse racing in New York State has a champion in Governor Kathy Hochul, who clearly recognizes the important role the sport plays in New York’s economy and culture,” **said NYRA President & CEO Dave O’Rourke.** “Thanks to the Governor’s consistent support, and the work of our partners in the legislature, Belmont Park will be restored to its rightful place as one of the great venues in all of sports.”

**Senator Kevin Thomas said,** “A reinvigorated Belmont Park will be huge for Long Island. Not only will it bring more jobs to the region, but also will bring more tax revenue and putting Long Island back on the map as a thriving entertainment hub. The last time Belmont Park was renovated was in 1968, which is why it’s absolutely time to properly modernize and upgrade these facilities. We are excited to breathe new life into this industry so we can bring

the Belmont Stakes, the Breeders Cup and their fans back to Long Island – with good paying jobs and more tourism to the region for decades to come!”

“I am thrilled that the final New York State budget included funding for the redevelopment of Belmont Park. Modernizing Belmont Park will bring this iconic sports destination into the 21st century by providing amenities the community and fans expect. In turn, it will become a world-class facility that reflects the pride and character of New York’s historic horse racing community. This is about more than physical upgrades: The project will create and preserve thousands of union jobs for residents throughout southeast Queens, Nassau County and the broader New York metropolitan region,” **said Assemblymember Michaele Solages.**

“It was great to be here to celebrate the historic \$455 million loan that will help transform Belmont Park into a premiere destination for horse racing fans not only here in New York, but across the country,” **said State Senator Joseph P. Addabbo, Jr.** “This is a major victory for the horse racing industry, the workers and the fans of the sport. I am excited to see the completion of this massive project and to make horse racing in New York the best that it can be. The chance to create thousands of jobs, hundreds of millions in economic development, an environmentally friendly racing site and a more efficient, successful NYRA makes the new Belmont Park a “land of opportunity.”

**John R. Durso, President of the Long Island Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO said,** “On behalf of the Long Island workforce, we are excited to help NYRA deliver a world class venue at Belmont Park, restoring it to its former glory. This racetrack represents the final jewel of the triple crown, and all the history and tradition that go with it. Governor Hochul and the New York State Legislature, particularly Senator Kevin Thomas and Assemblywoman Michaele Solages, have a vision for a better Belmont. The working people of Long Island are going to make it a reality, and a project labor agreement is the best insurance policy New York State

can put on this investment. It guarantees we strengthen our communities and our economy by putting local people to work.”

“I want to thank Senator Thomas and Assemblymember Solages for their leadership in securing this loan for a full renovation of Belmont Park,” **said Matthew Aracich, President of the Building and Construction Trades Council of Nassau and Suffolk Counties.** “This major initiative, which will be covered by a project labor agreement, will not only create thousands of jobs for the local skilled tradeswomen and tradesmen, but will also serve as a training site for hundreds of apprentices that represent traditionally marginalized communities”

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