



From the EXECUTIVE CORNER



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CTBA LOBBYIST

SPORTS WAGERING AMID THE PANDEMIC

The coronavirus pandemic has had a devastating impact on our country, with too many lives lost, people suffering, the economy, and even our mental health. It also put a sudden stop to the collection of signatures for the tribal initiative to authorize sports wagering supported by California horse racing. The tribes had hoped to have it on the November 2020 ballot, but that was not possible in the wake of COVID-19.

A very wise woman, the immortal Dolly Parton, is fond of saying, "The way I see it, if you want the rainbow, you gotta put up with the rain." Personally, I'm a big fan of rain, but the point is there are brighter days ahead. The tribes filed a lawsuit with the Superior Court of California seeking their full allotment of time to gather signatures. Their efforts

were successful, and they now have until Dec. 14 to obtain the required number of signatures to qualify for the 2022 ballot. The tribes had spent approximately \$7 million by mid-March before the stay-at-home orders went out from the governor.

The tribes tell me they will reach the million and a half signatures they need in order to meet the almost one million verified signatures before December. The tribal initiative would authorize tribal casinos and designated racetracks to offer legalized sports wagering in their brick-and-mortar facilities and would allow additional games for tribes. The proposal does not allow card rooms to participate or allow for mobile or online wagering.

At CTBA we have worked hard to build a strong relationship with our tribal friends and find ways to work together, as

opposed to letting past disagreements prevent us from moving forward to grow and enhance our opportunities. We will continue to seek common ground.

We also expect to see an effort in the legislature next year to put something directly on the ballot.

Rumors persist that Draft Kings and FanDuel want a piece of the legal sports wagering pie, along with card rooms and professional sports teams. Their model is founded in mobile and online, currently exclusive to pari-mutuel wagering. Some tribes will fight this with all their worth, and some might actually work with the legislature to delay the implementation date and negotiate the details, such as protecting Class III gaming. If the legislature does pass something next year, this would set up competing ballot initiatives on the November 2022 ballot. **CTB**