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Horse-betting bill voted down

Like a firecracker exploding in their faces, last week's surprising rout of the pari-mutuel betting issue left pro-gambling forces shocked, wounded and wondering what went wrong.

What was expected to be a close vote, resembling the 1-to-2 vote difference in '83, turned into a lopsided 96-52 massacre as the Texas House of Representatives voted against passing the horse-betting bill to third reading.

And in the shocked aftermath, opponents quickly sealed the bill's fate by winning a motion "to reconsider and table it," a little used parliamentary procedure that makes a two-thirds vote necessary before the bill can be brought up again for consideration.

Several freshmen legislators were confused by the motion and found out afterwards they had voted against their issue.

Although the bill's House sponsor and Speaker Gib Lewis pronounced the bill "dead" for the remainder of the session,



STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS
By Liquid Willows
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Other members think the bill may yet be revived in the Senate, where the Harris, R. Dallas, has pledged to push forward.

Harris chairs the powerful Economic Development Committee, and Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby also favors the issue. Speaker Lewis went so far as to publicly advise Hobby to drop the issue as "dead," but speculation has it that Hobby might also try to revitalize the bill.

Crumpled coalition
Even if the Senate approves, as it did last session, the two-thirds barrier still remains in the House, a quota higher than the strongest coalition tally that pro-gambling forces have put together.

And that coalition crumbled into pieces last week following a dismantling of the bill's welfare provisions in committee. Bowing to the wishes of the horse racing industry, panelists deleted the section directing part of every racetrack's proceeds to child welfare. That section was important to minority lawmakers who had withheld support in '83 until it was included.

Blacks, Republicans
Even though the gambling lobbyists tried to appease them by guaranteeing a percentage of racetrack stock to minority investors, the Black lawmakers in particular weren't buying in. And the substitute was similar enough to affirmative action to repel most of the Republican legislators.

Many legislators will support pari-mutuel betting only if they know it will pass. They don't want to face the folks back home after voting aye on a controversial issue that failed.

who want more courses time to take them.

But, the phrase heard most often then, and now, was why make the day longer and add another class period, when that penalizes the poorer students that "can't pass six classes."

The reversal of the educational system ought to make for a half decade or more is to focus attention on the early grades. If that can be successful, the problems now facing schools in the later grades will decline.

The reason this should be considered is not the fact that too many students fail courses in upper grades; that is the result of the problem. The problem is that society has changed.

The family unit isn't what it used to be. Both spouses in more than 50 percent of all households work outside the home. With both parents concentrating on careers and earning enough to support a family, there is less time to concentrate on family life itself.

The abundance of leisure time activity also reduces the time families spend together.

Also, some family values appear to have been lost altogether. Among some social groups, there is very little support of educational values; without home-front reinforcement to do well in school, the

knowledge a student can extract from classrooms decreases.

Measuring student progress ranks with all the other subjective topics you can think of attempting to reduce results to comparable numbers leaves factions quibbling about measuring systems. The schools, however, should rethink their view of what a student should know at the end of the third and sixth grades, and reflect their efforts. While it opens a can of worms for the American system to think the school system should teach something other than reading and writing, it really is time to consider other topics such as human relations, respect, etc. If a child isn't getting this information at home or in church, where else will it come from?

Since the Rice district school board apparently is thinking about a new direction in reading, it should also review other areas. If it would be better to reduce by half the teacher-student ratio in grades one through three, then let's read, it should also review other areas. If it would be better to reduce by half the teacher-student ratio in grades one through three, then let's read, it should also review other areas.

It only makes sense that if 'Johnny can't read at the end of grade three, then he or she won't be able to pass history in grade 10.

The social damage is tremendous. Accidents remove healthy, productive people and billions of dollars from the economy, as well as costing all of us higher insurance premiums and more welfare payments.

State Senator Ted Lyon (D-Rockwall) and Rep. Bill Messer (D-Bellton) have introduced legislation requiring front-seat occupants to wear their belts or be guilty of a traffic violation. Several states have passed similar laws in recent

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