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Testimony
SB 319
Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee

Rick Loveall

Our testimony is focused on section 4 of SB 319 starting on page 2. This new section would provide for a new Clear Vote on the question of whether electronic gaming machines would be allowed at the Wichita Greyhound Park.

We call it a "clean vote" because the original vote in 2007 included a ballot question related to Wichita Greyhound Park that asked voters to approve the following question:

"Shall the Kansas Lottery be authorized to place electronic gaming machines in Sedgwick County?"

This question, dictated by statute, left voters confused. Opponents claimed the language authorized slot machines in every bar, convenience store and restaurant. Without any reference to Wichita Greyhound Park, or at least a pari-mutuel racetrack facility, voters were unsure what they were being asked to approve.

Polls conducted by KWCH (Survey USA) in 2007 asked whether voters supported placement of slot machines at Wichita Greyhound Park. Those polls showed overwhelming voter support exceeding an 18% margin.

As you know, the ballot question failed by less than 300 votes in an election where more than 100 thousand votes were cast. We believe voter confusion played a significant role in the outcome

SB 319 provides an opportunity to give the voters a clear choice with an understandable ballot question:

"Shall the operation of electronic gaming machines at the Wichita Greyhound Park by the Kansas Lottery be permitted in Sedgwick County?"

SB 319 allows the County Commission to place the question on the ballot by resolution, or the question can be placed on the ballot through a petition process that requires 5,000 signatures of registered voters.

For us, reopening Wichita Greyhound Park is a Jobs and Economic Development opportunity, adding more than 500 jobs and \$100 million in new investment, without tax increment financing, bonds or other local government contributions.

We ask you to support this important opportunity.

Sn Fed & State
Attachment 11

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Wichita Wins is an informal group of local business owners, the local community, former WGP employees, members of the Greyhound industry and Kansas Horse industry trying to find out if the local community is still interested in reopening the WGP.

The track closed in 2007 after a heart breaking election failure rejected an opportunity to add gaming machines at the track.

It is a simple question:

Is the community interested in 500 Jobs, and \$100 million in new investment during these tough economic times?

This project does not require special incentives or tax breaks. It is private investment bringing real opportunity in a community that needs it. A clear vote by the residents of Sedgwick County is all it takes to unleash jobs and opportunity that is being lost because of confusion over a ballot question.

The group has grown to 60 volunteers, who have worked to gather information and support for the opportunity to "bring back the track." WichitaWins has financial support from the Ruffin Companies, but is operated independently by the volunteers who plan and promote the effort.