



To: Chairman, Troy Waymaster
Vice Chair, Erin Davis
Members, House Appropriations Committee

From: Terry Humphrey
Humane Society Legislative Fund of Kansas

Re: HB 2173: Oppose Greyhound Racing in Kansas

Date: March 23, 2017

I am Terry Humphrey with the Humane Society Legislative Fund of Kansas (HSLF KS). HSLF KS works to pass animal protection laws at the state and federal levels and to educate the public about animal protection issues. Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns about the possible return of greyhound racing in Kansas.

Let me begin by saying that we oppose greyhound racing because it is a cruel sport that abuses, maims and/or kills thousands of dogs in the name of “entertainment.” It also encourages the proliferation of greyhound puppy mills. Greyhound racing has been outlawed in 40 states, most recently in Arizona just last year.

This industry came to Kansas in 1989 with the opening of two dog tracks: Wichita Greyhound Park and The Woodlands, in KCK. A third track, Camptown Greyhound Park, in Frontenac, opened in 1995 only to close 13 weeks later. All three tracks closed after experiencing significant financial losses, effectively ending greyhound racing in Kansas in 2008.

But not all losses can be measured in dollars and cents. In the last six months of operation at The Woodlands, 80 dogs were injured. The majority of injuries were broken legs, but there were also sprains, torn muscles and a spinal injury. Nineteen dogs were euthanized or died *while racing*.

Last spring, the Unified Government of Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas voted to prohibit dog racing at the The Woodlands. We are urging legislators to follow their lead by prohibiting dog racing at the two remaining tracks in this bill: Wichita Greyhound Park and Camptown Greyhound Park.

Greyhound racing failed in Kansas because consumers voted with their pocketbooks not to support it. Now HB 2173 proposes to revive it by subsidizing this outdated form of “entertainment” with modern slot machines. In order to qualify for slot machines, Wichita Greyhound Park must conduct “at least 100 live greyhound races each calendar week,” and Camptown Greyhound Park must run “at least 85 live greyhound races each calendar week.” It

goes without saying that the numbers of injured and dead greyhounds will undoubtedly skyrocket.

Is it worth it? HB 2173 is a complex bill that asks legislators to take a big gamble with the status quo because the marriage of dog racing and slot machines allegedly represents an economic opportunity for Kansas. But you need only look to the experiences of other states to see that this is a ruse. Subsidizing dog racing with profits from expanded gaming has failed in Iowa, Rhode Island and West Virginia. Iowa and Rhode Island have rescinded these subsidies, and West Virginia is considering it.

In Florida, where two dog tracks were authorized to offer slot machine gambling if they also run a full schedule of live racing, they want to end the live racing mandate at their facilities. Florida tracks lose more than \$40 million on live racing each year, but they need to maintain the activity as a loss leader for other profitable forms of expanded gambling they wish to offer.

In Arkansas, despite the introduction of slot machines at its Southland dog track, the amount of money wagered on live dog racing has still plummeted 45% in the last eight years.

It should be noted that nationwide, the dog racing industry as a whole employs very few people. The US Economic Census of 2012 indicated that the total number of racetrack employees in counties with active dog tracks was between 7,788 – 16,059 people. This included full- and part-time employees for all horse tracks, dog tracks and auto racetracks. These figures represented the aggregate employment data for 58 racetrack facilities, of which only 22 were dog tracks. The minimal employment opportunities provided by greyhound tracks is further supported by data from the Iowa Racing and Gaming Association, which reported that its two tracks had only 88 racing employees as of 2014. One of these two tracks stopped offering racing in December 2015.

In short, dog racing is a dying industry wherever it exists, and using slot machines as an economic generator for live dog racing is a scheme that doesn't work. We at HSLF KS strongly urge the committee to end this cruel industry by prohibiting greyhound racing in Kansas. **Reject HB 2173.**