



Chair Barker and Members of the Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today regarding HB 2173.

My name is Midge Grinstead, and I am the Kansas Senior State Director for The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), the largest animal welfare protection organization in the country. On behalf of our members and supporters in Kansas, we oppose House Bill 2173.

HB 2173 is designed to bring back greyhound racing through a slot subsidy scheme. Greyhound racing is an inhumane activity that has been largely rejected by your constituents and the American public. They simply don't attend these races. Greyhound racing has economically failed everywhere.

HB 2173 will increase greyhound breeding and racing, and in turn increase suffering for dogs. As a past shelter director and current board member for the Kansas Animal Control Association, I can tell you that these animal welfare concerns not only impact greyhounds, but the state as well. Public and private agencies will be forced to absorb the costs of investigating related cruelty complaints, taking in dogs with injuries and illness for treatment, rescue and adoption, and picking up dead discarded bodies of dogs dumped when the racing industry is done with them, as I have witnessed in the past.

The racing industry promotes and tolerates an overproduction of dogs, resulting in an annual surplus numbering in the thousands, many of whom will end up being destroyed despite the best efforts of shelters and rescue groups.

Greyhound racing is a dying industry and is illegal in 40 states. Since 2001, more than two dozen dog tracks have closed all across the country and dog racing now represents less than 1% of all wagers placed each year in the United States.

Racing proved to be a bad experiment for Kansas, and in 2008, with a 95% decline in gambling, forcing the facilities to close. It makes little sense to subsidize this industry with slots to bring it back. HB 2173 will damage the reputation of our state and will put thousands of greyhounds at risk. We urge you to oppose this bill.

Thank you for your consideration today. I am happy to answer any questions you might have to the best of my ability.

Sincerely,  
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