

My name is Susan Kaufmann, and I live in Fairway, Kansas, and work in Kansas City, Kansas. I am a board member, foster and volunteer for a local animal shelter in Kansas. On behalf of the animal sheltering and rescue community within Kansas, we oppose SB427, which would allow the return of greyhound racing to Kansas. I am also opposing this bill as a concerned Kansan and taxpayer. As such, I am focusing my testimony against the return of greyhound racing upon lack of sustainability of this so-called "sport" and the excessive waste and burden it would bring to our communities.

First, greyhound racing is locally unsustainable. A majority of Kansans are simply not interested in participating as spectators in this inhumane activity. This was evidenced last year when the Unified Government of Wyandotte County was considering the business license for the Woodlands. Constituents of the County Board of Commissioners resoundingly rejected the return of greyhound racing to the Woodlands and flooded the commissioners with calls and emails opposing the return of dog racing. The response was so overwhelming that the commission granted the business license to the Woodlands with the caveat that greyhound racing would not be allowed at the track. It is not sustainable to pursue an activity that a Kansas community recently resoundingly rejected.

Nationally, greyhound racing is not sustainable either and has economically failed everywhere. Greyhound racing is a dying industry and is illegal in 40 states. Since 2001, more than two dozen dog tracks have closed in the U.S. Dog racing now represents less than 1 percent of all wagers placed each year in this country. Why, in this time of belt tightening in the state of Kansas, would we want to reinstitute something that will most definitely economically fail? It defies logic.

Greyhound racing is wasteful and puts an unnecessary burden on public and private agencies forced to absorb the costs of investigating cruelty complaints as well as the cost of taking in dogs with illness and injuries for treatment that greyhound racers refuse to pay. There is also the cost of sheltering and rehoming these dogs. Lastly, there is the economic and emotional cost of law enforcement and animal control agencies picking up the discarded corpses of dogs dumped by the racing industry when the industry is done with them, as evidenced by past behavior right here in the state of Kansas. The racing industry promotes and tolerates a wasteful overproduction of dogs, resulting in an annual surplus numbering in the thousands. Many of these dogs end up being destroyed at young ages despite the best efforts of shelters and rescue groups.

In addition, bringing back greyhound racing is a waste of Kansas' reputation. Other states are making dog racing illegal, yet Kansas is trying to bring it back. This would demonstrate that Kansas is willing to regress while other states are progressing.

Do we really want to waste the reputation of Kansas and put thousands of dogs at risk for something that a majority of Kansans do not want and that will economically fail? Thank you for your consideration in rejecting the return of greyhound racing to Kansas by voting no on SB 427.