

To the Honorable John Barker and Distinguished Representatives:

It is my fervent hope that Kansas HB2199 will be amended to remove racetrack gaming facilities (racinos) and to prohibit wagering on live Greyhound racing that occurs anywhere. The resumption of, and the sanctioned gambling on, live Greyhound racing would be an abhorrent step backwards for the State of Kansas.

Greyhound racing is thankfully outlawed in all but a few states in this country, to a large degree because people nationwide have come to understand that its practices are miserably disgraceful. These very sensitive animals can live lives of abysmal confinement, sometimes enduring up to 23 hours a day in kennels so small they can barely turn around. They suffer race-connected injuries such as broken legs, backs, or necks. Sometimes these dogs are electrocuted by the high voltage used to power the racing lures.

The drugging of racing Greyhounds with steroids is not unusual. Aside from the damage these drugs do to their overall health, the dogs can have an increase in aggression. Dogs who have drug-fueled aggression can be hard to control, and may suffer abuse by frustrated and fearful handlers (who are often working part-time for low wages and no benefits).

To save money, racing Greyhounds are often fed sub-standard meat, some of it containing pathogens. The pathogens could be destroyed by cooking, but it is apparently a common belief in the racing industry that a raw meat diet makes dogs more competitive, so these measures to protect the dogs' health are not observed. When a dog becomes ill, the high stress, close-quartered living spaces allow disease to quickly proliferate. And in the end, once they have outlived their moneymaking ability, these dogs often die ugly deaths or are simply cast off.

The massive breeding practices of the Greyhound racing industry would create a nightmarish new burden for the already-overburdened shelters and rescues of Kansas. At the present time, all of us in Kansas animal sheltering/rescue struggle to care for the tremendous number of animals who need us; having a large new source of unwanted dogs is unimaginable. Furthermore, many of these animals would be suffering from the abusive practices they have endured. We would be dealing with dogs who have a host of physical and emotional/behavioral problems perpetrated by the racing industry. There is a possibility that a heartbreaking number of these innocent animals would never be adoptable.

The resumed sanctioning of a sport that is known to be cruel to animals would be a black mark on the reputation of the State of Kansas. As one voice for the dogs who would suffer if this is allowed, I humbly ask that the State, in its wisdom, deny the resumption of Greyhound racing by removing racetrack gaming facilities from HB2199 and prohibiting the wagering on live Greyhound racing anywhere. Kansas must move forward into a kinder, better future for both its citizens and its animals.

Respectfully and hopefully yours,

Brittni Israel

Director

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