

Testimony in Opposition to HB 2032

To: Chairman John Barker
Vice Chair Francis Awerkamp
Members, House Federal & State Affairs Committee

From:

Humane Society Legislative Fund of Kansas
Humane Society Legislative Fund of the Midwest
Humane Society of the United States
Kansas Animal Control Association
Kansas City RE-GAP – Greyhound Rescue, Kansas City
Humane Society of Greater KC, Kansas City
Great Plains SPCA, Merriam
The Pet Connection Olathe
Leavenworth Co Humane Society, Leavenworth
Southeast Kansas Humane Society, Pittsburg
Allen County Animal Rescue Facility, La Harpe
Animals With Our Love, Independence
Wichita Animal Action League
Beauties and Beasts, Wichita
Second Chances, Wichita
Companion Animal Protection Society of Kansas, Wichita
K9 Karma Animal Advocates, Wichita
Mt. Hope Animal Sanctuary, Wichita
Kansas K9 ResQ, Wichita
Friends of Felines, Wichita
Heartstrings Animal Advocates, El Dorado
Helping Hands Humane Society, Topeka
Cattails, Manhattan
Finney County Humane Society, Garden City
We are A Grateful Sanctuary (WAGS), Winfield
Hands of Hope Rescue, Great Bend
Chasing Tails Rescue, Great Bend
SRL – All Breed Dog Rescue, Minneapolis
Rockin Paw Rescue, Emporia

Re: HB 2032 - Oppose Sports Betting at Greyhound Racing Facilities

Date: January 30, 2019

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Terry Humphrey, lobbyist for the Humane Society of the United States and the Humane Society Legislative Fund of Kansas. Today, I am speaking on behalf of a coalition of animal welfare organizations in Kansas who oppose greyhound racing. Please review the above list of organizations that oppose HB 2032.

Our coalition opposes any legislative action, subsidy or incentive designed to bring greyhound racing back to Kansas. We believe HB 2032 is a first step in that direction. HB 2032 purports to limit sports gambling in Kansas to occur solely on the racetrack gaming facilities property. We do not have a position on sports gambling, but we do oppose coupling sports gambling to greyhound racetrack facilities.

Greyhound Racing Rejected

Of significant note, greyhound racetrack gaming facilities have not been operational in Kansas for more than a decade. The public has rejected this activity. Greyhound racing is cruel, inhumane and not profitable.

When the last greyhound racetrack closed in 2008, racetrack gambling revenue had declined by 95 percent. Over the last ten years, the country's disdain for greyhound racing has only galvanized. This past November, Floridians overwhelmingly voted to outlaw dog racing in their state, joining residents from 40 other states who also have outlawed greyhound racing due to animal cruelty issues and declining revenue. Notably, the Florida ban had broad support across geographical and political boundaries. The message is clear: the American public is simply not interested in and will not support this outdated and cruel "sport".

Greyhound Racing: Economic Failure

It is our understanding that sports gambling gross profit margins are extremely small. Consequently, this revenue will not be a sufficient economic incentive for greyhound racetracks to reopen. The legislature will have to be willing to provide additional subsidies to resurrect a cruel and inhumane activity that continues to be resoundingly rejected by its constituents.

Just this past legislative session, the owner of the three defunct racetracks in Kansas advocated for significant subsidies he claims are necessary to make reopening the racetracks economically viable. See SB 427 (defeated 17-20) and HB 2543 (died on the calendar).

In short, Kansas has rejected the activity of greyhound racing, because it is cruel and inhumane. As a result, racetrack gaming facilities have proved unprofitable ventures and have been closed in Kansas for over a decade. A law limiting sports gambling to racetrack venues will not alter this reality or generate the public support needed to make racetracks profitable.

In closing, we respectfully request that you vote "No" on HB 2032. Thank you.