



House Federal & State Affairs Committee  
Chairman Barker  
Committee Assistant: Connie Bahner

February 9, 2018

Re: Oppose House Bill 2545

I am writing on behalf of the Midwest Alliance for Animals (MAA), a coalition of Kansas animal shelters that provide services to local communities. Our organizations care for over 29,146 animals annually and approximately 1.16 million people in Southern, Central, and Northeastern Kansas. Our combined budgets total over \$12.8 million annually, funded by local government partners, private donations, and program services. Together, we employ hundreds of Kansas residents.

We oppose House Bill 2545 for several reasons. This bill creates an incentive for greyhound racing to bolster the economy, but several states show us that the incentive approach will not have the intended effect for state revenue. More than thirty tracks have closed in ten states, and the last remaining track in Iowa has seen a 41% reduction in wagering.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Kansas tracks experienced a steep decline in greyhound gambling and live greyhound racing ended in August of 2008. The state did not close these racetracks down, the state did not make greyhound racing unlawful; the residents of Kansas unequivocally closed down greyhound racing economically. Any promise of economic growth by racing industry professionals to this committee completely ignores the facts.

The creative preamble to this bill outlines the "history" of greyhound racing in the state as an assurance that breed registering agencies creating a plan for economic development will bring money to Kansas. If the national greyhound association of Abilene, Kansas, was a successful business operation, then greyhound racing should be flourishing across the nation. But recent history shows us that not only do Kansas residents not want greyhound racing in their communities, but nationally, greyhound racing is nearly extinct with forty states prohibiting racing. Any economic plan drafted by these breed registering agencies will fail just as racing has.

Not only have these breed registering agencies failed economically, they have also failed the dogs they are responsible for protecting. In Kansas, the Department of Agriculture is not allowed to license or inspect greyhound facilities, breeding "farms," or training tracks, it is up to the "national greyhound association."<sup>2</sup> The same association that allowed 11,722 greyhound injuries,

<sup>1</sup> "Handle Report Iowa Greyhound Park," [irgc.iowa.gov](http://irgc.iowa.gov), Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission, November 2017, [irgc.iowa.gov](http://irgc.iowa.gov) (accessed November 15, 2017); "2007 Annual Report," [irgc.iowa.gov](http://irgc.iowa.gov), Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission, 2008, [irgc.iowa.gov](http://irgc.iowa.gov) (accessed November 15, 2017).

MAA 347-1226

OUR MISSION

The Midwest Alliance for Animals is a network of animal shelter professionals who use data-driven information and best practices to advocate for and improve the standards of care for companion animals in the Midwest.

and 909 deaths over a period of just 7 years.<sup>3</sup> Many racing greyhounds come from Kansas, and these numbers are a window into what will come back to Kansas if this bill passes.

The Kansas Humane Society (KHS) in Wichita is a member of our Alliance and is opposed to this bill, specifically, Section 7, *requiring* Sedgwick County Board of Commissioners to hold a special election to tell us what Sedgwick County residents already have: they do not want greyhound racing in their community. As the organization responsible for treating and housing victims of animal abuse in Sedgwick County, KHS does not want to see the increase in greyhound abuse that comes with opening the racetrack, as evidenced above.

An industry that requires statutory intervention to force a special election question will not bring money to our state. All of these efforts to save a dying industry is costly, overreaching, and will do nothing to bolster the economy in Kansas. As such, we oppose the greyhound incentives in this bill.

Sincerely,



Katie Bray Barnett  
Animal Welfare Counsel

Mark Eby, President/CEO  
Kansas Humane Society, *Wichita*

Melissa Reed, Executive Director  
Prairie Paws Animal Shelter, *Ottawa*

Nate Meador, President/CEO  
Great Plains SPCA, *Merriam*

Vanessa Cowie, Animal Services Manager  
Salina Animal Services, *Salina*

Kate Meghji, Executive Director  
Lawrence Humane Society, *Lawrence*

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<sup>3</sup> "High Stakes: Greyhound Racing in the United States," Cook, Amelia, Grey2k, American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, 2015.