

February 15th 2021

To Representative John Barker and The Committee on Federal and State Affairs,

My name is Vanessa Cowie and I am the Executive Director of the Prairie Paws Animal Shelter in Ottawa KS, I am a first-generation American that chose Kansas as my home in 2011. I am writing to oppose House Bill 2199 Authorizing sports wagering under the Kansas expanded lottery act as it is written. I have spent the weekend researching and trying to understand why legislature would force racetrack gaming facilities to run a minimum number of live greyhound races in order to offer sports wagering. By linking these two business practices together, gaming facilities will be financially incentivized to race live greyhounds, even though that practice is not financially sustainable on it's own – as history has proven.

Additionally, limiting the definition of “sporting event” in this bill to only apply to races occurring in Kansas is merely a very obvious loophole in the prohibition of betting on live greyhounds, and should be amended to include races outside of Kansas in the prohibition.

Although it is always my intent to submit respectful testimony, and copying and pasting becomes ever-appealing, it is becoming tiresome to continue to rake through gaming bills trying to find the “gotcha” every year. Kansans don't want live greyhounds being raced, they have made that very clear. Kansans don't donate millions towards animal welfare organizations annually to support teams like mine saving lives and preventing unwanted litters, just so gaming organizations can cause suffering behind closed doors. Facilities like mine are expected to pass state inspections with flying colors and save over 90% of the animals that enter our facility. Meanwhile greyhound farms are not being inspected by the state, and therefore we have no idea how many dogs survive that life or how bad it truly is. Every dog should be provided the same level of care, regardless of breed or the facility they end up in. It is inconsistent for the state to legislate different levels of care on something so arbitrary as breed. I think we can all agree that a dog is a dog, and if I was a dog I would pray I wasn't a greyhound.

Respectfully submitted,

Vanessa Cowie

Executive Director
Prairie Paws Animal Shelter Inc.