

**Testimony to the Kansas House Agriculture Committee
House Bill 2508**

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► Introduction:

Good morning Chairman Johnson and other members of this committee. I am Kevin Neuman, and I appreciate the opportunity to speak before you today as a Kansas private citizen. I live and work in Overland Park and also volunteer for several not-for-profit organizations but receive no financial compensation of any kind. I am not a lobbyist and my testimony is not influenced in any way by a desire to benefit economically.

I am here to urge the state of Kansas to recognize a greyhound as a dog, which is the intent of House Bill 2508.

► When and why a greyhound was excluded from being a canine in Kansas.

My research of Kansas statute 47-1701, which in 1996 became the Kansas Pet Animal Act, indicates its origin was in 1972 and amended in 1974 and 1980 before the significant amendment in 1988 that also specifically excluded a greyhound registered with the National Greyhound Association from being a dog. I was unable to uncover any records that explained this exclusion but since Kansas voters passed in 1986 the amendment to the Kansas Constitution to allow pari-mutuel racing, a logical conclusion would be that the greyhound breeding, training and racing industries lobbied for the exclusion. At that time, the economic expectations of those industries were very optimistic and what better way to enhance profits than to be the fox that guards the hen house and exclude greyhounds from the protection the state of Kansas provided to all other dogs.

► Important to consider other greyhound history than a Kansas statute.

Well before Kansas said it was not a dog in 1988, the greyhound has a history unmatched by any other breed of dog. In early Arabian culture, the birth of a greyhound was cause for great celebrations and second only in importance to the birth of a son. Persians believed that the greyhound was permitted in the next world to give information and evidence about mankind. During the 15th century, English commoners were beheaded if caught with a greyhound in their possession, thereby strongly encouraging greyhound ownership remaining an elite activity shared only by nobility. Also, the destruction of a greyhound was an extremely serious crime. Some famous greyhound fanciers were Queen Elizabeth I, George Washington, Teddy Roosevelt, General George Custer and Cleopatra – legend has it that she created her striking eye makeup patterned from the beautiful eyes of a greyhound. Greyhounds were also the only dog mentioned by name in the King James Version of the Bible¹.

► In no other state, even the few that still allow greyhound racing, is a greyhound not a dog.

I have used every resource available to me and can find no other state that excludes a greyhound as a dog. Although only fourteen (14) other states² allow greyhound racing, none of them exclude a greyhound from being a dog and therefore from the protection of the state. Even Florida, with the most tracks of any state, does not exclude a greyhound from being a dog. Of course, none of the 35 states that do not allow greyhound racing define a greyhound as not being a dog. Therefore, the Kansas government is the only one in the United States, and perhaps in the entire world, that says a greyhound is not a dog.

► **Now, more than ever, a greyhound needs to be a dog in Kansas.**

As informed citizens continue to reduce the attendance at greyhound racing tracks around the United States, the optimism of the 1980s in the greyhound breeding, training and racing industries declines³ as well, and is replaced by an urgency to make money on a product the public no longer wants⁴. This provides an environment in which more greyhounds will be bred to find the fastest one for that chance to obtain a share of the diminishing race revenue. It is important that the state of Kansas recognizes a greyhound as a dog and be protected by the Kansas Pet Animal Act. The state of Kansas, already with what could be considered a controversial past regarding animal protection, should not continue to stand alone in its exclusion of a greyhound from being a dog.

► **Conclusion.**

There are thousands of Kansans, and millions of people around the world, who know a greyhound is one of the most intelligent, sensitive, calm and loving creatures on the planet. During our over ten (10) years of greyhound advocacy, my wife and I have found our best friends, greyhounds. Mans' best friend, a dog. Please let our best friends be dogs in Kansas.



¹ King James version, Proverbs 30:29-31

² See attached list of tracks open in states that allow racing as of January, 2005. Oregon is a racing state but see footnote 4.

³ Documentation attached.

⁴ One of the oldest tracks in the country, Magna Entertainment announced on December 24, 2004 that it would not renew its lease on the Multnomah Greyhound Park in Portland, Oregon, effectively ending 70 years of greyhound racing in Oregon.

Greyhound Racetracks Operating in the United States as of January 1, 2005

State/Track	City/Town	Opened	Operation	State/Track	City/Town	Opened	Operation
ALABAMA				RHODE ISLAND			
Birmingham RC	Birmingham	1992	Year-round	Lincoln GP (2)	Lincoln	1977	Year-round
Mobile GP	Theodore	1973	Year-round	TEXAS			
VictoryLand	Shorter	1984	Year-round	Corpus Christi GT	Corpus Christi	1990	Year-round
ARIZONA				Gulf GP	La Marque	1992	Year-round
Phoenix GP	Phoenix	1954	Year-round	Valley Race Park (3)	Harlingen	2000	Seasonal
Tucson GP	Tucson	1944	Year-round	WEST VIRGINIA			
ARKANSAS				Tri-State (2)	Cross Lanes	1985	Year-round
Southland GP	West Memphis	1956	Year-round	Wheeling Downs (2)	Wheeling	1976	Year-round
COLORADO				WISCONSIN			
Cloverleaf GP	Loveland	1955	Seasonal	Dairyland GP	Kenosha	1990	Year-round
Wembley Park (1)	Commerce City	1949	Seasonal	Geneva Lakes KC	Delavan	1990	Year-round
CONNECTICUT				(1) Formerly Mile High Greyhound Park			
Plainfield GP	Plainfield	1975	Year-round	(2) Offers casino gambling; known as a "racino"			
Shoreline Star	Bridgeport	1995	Seasonal	(3) Valley Race Park opened in 1990 and closed in 1995. Seasonal live racing resumed in December 2000 under new ownership.			
FLORIDA				<hr/>			
Ebro GT	Washington Co.	1995	Seasonal	As of January 2005, the 42 dog tracks listed above are conducting live racing in 14 states. The following 20 tracks have either closed completely, been destroyed, or ceased live racing since 1991:			
Daytona Beach KC	Daytona Beach	1948	Year-round	Key West	Florida	1963-1991	(2)
Flagler GT	Miami	1932	Seasonal	Interstate	Colorado	1971-1991	
Hollywood GT	Hallandale	1934	Seasonal	Green Mountain	Vermont	1976-1992	
Jacksonville KC	Jacksonville	1935	Seasonal	Black Hills	South Dakota	1949-1992	(2)
Jefferson County	Monticello	1959	Year-round	Yuma	Arizona	1965-1993	
Melbourne GP	Melbourne	1991	Year-round	Fox Valley	Wisconsin	1990-1993	(2)
Naples-Ft. Myers	Bonita Springs	1957	Year-round	Sodrac	South Dakota	1955-1994	(2)
Orange Park KC	Orange Park	1946	Seasonal	Coeur d'Alene	Idaho	1988-1995	
Palm Beach KC	W. Palm Beach	1932	Year-round	Biscayne	Florida	1926-1995	(2)
Pensacola GT	Pensacola	1946	Year-round	Greenetrack	Alabama	1977-1996	(1)
St. Petersburg KC	St. Petersburg	1925	Seasonal	Wisconsin Dells	Wisconsin	1990-1996	
Sanford-Orlando	Longwood	1935	Year-round	Waterloo	Iowa	1986-1996	
Sarasota KC	Sarasota	1944	Seasonal	Camptown GP	Kansas	1995-2000	
Tampa GP	Tampa	1933	Seasonal	St. Johns GP	Florida	1977-2000	(1)
IOWA				Seminole GP	Florida	1981-2001	(2)
Bluffs Run (2)	Council Bluffs	1986	Year-round	St. Croix Meadows	Wisconsin	1991-2001	
Dubuque GP (2)	Dubuque	1985	Seasonal	Pueblo GP	Colorado	1949-2002	(1)
KANSAS				Post Time (Rocky Mountain)	Colorado	1948-2003	(1)
Wichita GP	Wichita	1989	Year-round	Apache GP	Arizona	1965-2004	(1)
Woodlands	Kansas City	1989	Year-round	Multnomah GP	Oregon	1933-2004	
MASSACHUSETTS				(1) Remains open for simulcasting (2) Demolished or destroyed			
Raynham/Taunton	Raynham	1940	Year-round	<hr/>			
Wonderland	Revere (Boston)	1935	Year-round	Between 1993-2004, the following eight states enacted legislation banning greyhound racing: Maine, Virginia, Vermont, Idaho, Washington, Nevada, North Carolina and Pennsylvania.			
NEW HAMPSHIRE							
Hinsdale GP	Hinsdale	1973	Year-round				
Lakes Region GP	Belmont	1975	Seasonal				
Seabrook GP	Seabrook	1973	Year-round				

Abbreviations: RC–Race Course GP–Greyhound Park KC–Kennel Club GT–Greyhound Track

Wagering Handles Decline: Statistical Profile of 10 Racetracks Around the Country

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The following is a look at the decline in the live wagering handle at 10 racetracks across the country. Please note that approximately 80 percent of the handle, which is the total amount of money wagered, is returned to the public in winning bets. The remaining 20 percent, known as the takeout, is withheld by the track to pay state taxes, purses, operating expenses, salaries, etc.

- In Alabama, the handle at the Birmingham Race Course dropped from \$116 million in 1993 to \$42 million in 1998, a decline of 64 percent; attendance for the same period fell 36 percent, from 1.02 million to 650,000.
- In Arizona, the handle at Phoenix Greyhound Park dropped from \$88 million in fiscal year 1991-92 to \$30.7 million in fiscal year 1998-99, a decline of 65 percent; attendance for the same period fell 65 percent, from 599,792 to 207,870.
- The handle at Tucson Greyhound Park dropped from \$34.4 million in Fiscal year 1991-92 to \$9.9 million in fiscal year 1998-99, a decline of 71 percent.
- In Connecticut, the handle at Plainfield Greyhound Park dropped from \$96.4 million in 1990 to \$22.8 million in 1999, a decline of 76 percent; attendance for the same period fell 67 percent from 633,390 to 206,190.
- **In Kansas, the combined live and simulcast handle at The Woodlands dropped from \$197 million in 1990 to \$65.4 million in 1999, a decline of 67 percent; attendance for the same period fell 82 percent from 1.7 million to 305,489.**
- In Massachusetts, the handle at Raynham/Taunton Greyhound Park dropped from \$215.1 million in 1990 to \$64.7 million in 1998, a decline of 70 percent; attendance for the same period fell 61 percent from 1.8 million to 696,323. The handle at Wonderland Greyhound Park dropped from \$195.4 million in 1990 to \$31.3 million in 1998, a decline of 84 percent; attendance for the same period fell 69 percent from 1.3 million to 406,828.
- In Texas, the handle at Corpus Christi Greyhound Track dropped from \$33.9 million in 1995 to \$25.2 million in 1998, a decline of 26 percent; attendance for the same period fell 37 percent from 363,741 to 228,385.
- The handle at Gulf Greyhound Park dropped from \$149.6 million in 1995 to \$117.4 million in 1998, a decline of 22 percent; attendance for the same period fell 65 percent from 2,285,318 in 1995 to 794,761 in 1998.
- In Wisconsin, the handle at St. Croix Meadows dropped from \$37.5 million in 1993 to \$20.8 million in 1998, a decline of 45 percent. The average daily attendance for the same period fell 60 percent from approximately 1,000 to 400.