

Public Safety and Security Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5174
AN ACT PROHIBITING THE OPERATION OF GREYHOUND RACING IN THE
Title: STATE.
Vote Date: 3/1/2022
Vote Action: Joint Favorable
PH Date: 2/22/2022
File No.:

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REASONS FOR BILL:

Current Connecticut law would allow for a greyhound track to be opened in Connecticut. This bill would remove from state statute the authorization for live greyhound racing to take place in the state. There are 41 states in the country that have made greyhound racing illegal, it is

documented that the dogs are often subjected to cruel and inhumane treatment. This law does allow for simulcast betting to take place, which is regulated by the DCP. This bill passed the Committee and the House of Representatives with bipartisan support under HB6048 in 2021.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None Expressed

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Rep. Mike D'Agostino, House of Representatives, State of Connecticut

By passing this bill it would close out a sad chapter in state history that allowed live greyhound racing to happen in our state, it was a time when many dogs were abused and injured. It sends a strong message that we do not want this to happen again. This bill allows for betting on these races through simulcast, but we will not be part of allowing these live greyhound races to happen in our state.

Rep. D'Agostino then shared the story of his greyhound rescue dog, Vella.

Rep. Nicole Karides-Ditria, House of Representatives, State of Connecticut

As Co-Chair of the Animal Welfare Caucus, I feel this is an important piece of legislation for our state to enact as many of the other states in the country. Greyhound racing has been on the decline for many years, it is time for our laws to reflect this trend by establishing further laws, regulations and protections to prohibit greyhound racing in Connecticut.

Jo-Anne Basile, Executive Director, Connecticut Votes for Animals

Greyhound racing and its attendant use live baiting techniques, which is a cruel and inhumane form of gambling. The financial decline of greyhound racing reflects the public's disdain for greyhound racing. For the people of Connecticut live greyhound racing ended in 2005, this bill would ensure that live greyhound racing does not return to Connecticut.

Christine Dorchak, President and General Counsel, GREY2K USA

Though live racing ended in the state of Connecticut in 2005, the law currently allows owning and operating dog racing tracks in the state. Dog racing is cruel, inhumane and illegal in 41 other states. Like dog fighting it should no longer be permitted, accepted or tolerated. It is noted that thousands of dogs are destroyed yearly, once they are no longer profitable. The Greyhound Association does not keep records of these greyhounds once they stop performing. The treatment of the dogs once the Plainfield track closed drew national attention and the New York Times published at least three stories about the dog's dilemma. Gov. Rell and Atty. General Blumenthal stepped in and required each dog be accounted for and their orderly release to waiting adopters.

Annie Hornish, Connecticut Senior State Director, The Humane Society of the United States

Though this bill is a technical bill that removes from statute the allowance of an activity that ended in 2005 in Connecticut. Dog racing is associated with significant animal cruelty. Greyhounds are known to suffer extreme confinement and drugging; premature deaths and injuries are common. There are 41 states that currently consider greyhound racing illegal.

The dog racing industry has been found to use live lure bait training; small animals are forced to suffer in terror before being killed.

There were 12 other pieces of testimony in support of this bill.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Frederick A. Fulchino, Former President, American Greyhound Council, Former Vice President, National Greyhound Association

This bill will harm some Connecticut families and do nothing to advance the cause of welfare for racing and retired greyhounds. Please do not buy into the misrepresentations of our sport by organizations like GREY2K. Having spent my entire professional life involved in this sport, I have bred and raised thousands of dogs. Also was a member of the board of Directors for the National Greyhound Association whose sole responsibility is overseeing the breeding and racing of greyhounds in the country. Though there are no racetracks open in the state, it does not mean that no Connecticut families rely on greyhound racing for income. A ban in Connecticut would negatively affect racing in other states. There are many things stated by organizations like GREY2K about the care of greyhounds that are categorical lies.

Jim Garland, Executive Director, National Greyhound Association

Mr. Garland has been involved in greyhound racing for 45 years. Greyhound racing is seeing an uptick in betting by recent wagering figures out of West Virginia, it is not a dying sport. Greyhound racing and greyhound farms have been part of the fabric of American agricultural community for many years. Kansas and Alabama are looking to bring racing back to boost the economies and agricultural businesses in their states. Most of the rhetoric you hear from the anti-racing, anti-gambling animal rights activists is false. The NGA with its partner American Greyhound Council, as well hundreds of adoption agencies have accomplished a near 100% adoption rate. These animals are majestic and make great pets due to the way they are socialized and handled. Please do not support this bill

Reported by: Bonnie Gray, Asst. Clerk

Date: March 10, 2022