

**Testimony
SB 319
Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee**

Travis Bartley
Abilene, KS
January 31, 2012

Chairman Brungardt and Committee members,

My name is Travis Bartley, vice president of legislation for the Kansas Greyhound Association (KGA). I am a third generation greyhound operator in Kansas. I graduated from Emporia State University where I was a pitcher on the university's baseball team and also where I met my wife Kim. We have been married for 4 years we have a son Jake who is three. My wife is the shoe buyer for the Alco-Duckwall Company in Abilene. When I'm not at the farm or spending time with my family, I coach baseball at Abilene High School and help run camps and coach in the summer.

My younger brother AJ, who is an electrician in Abilene, helps out on the farm during the weekends. If live racing were restored in Kansas AJ would like to return to the farm full time.

My younger sister Kate is also working the family farm full time with me. She has a daughter Lily who is six. Kate has finished her associates degree as a paralegal. Our family would much rather stay in the greyhound business because it is what we know and love and are very passionate about.

I see firsthand every day the importance of our industry in Kansas communities. A significant amount of our farm income is spent locally for feed, veterinary services and supply. My family has one of the largest greyhound farms in Kansas.

I am here to testify in support of SB 319 with the exception of a significant issue that pertains to days of racing on page 12, Section 8 (1) and (3). The changes in these two locations make a substantial change in the racing requirements which were negotiated and agreed before passage of the original SB 66. We ask that you restore the original language. This issue will need to be changed to garner mine and the KGA board of directors full support.

We have been members in good standing with National Greyhound Association for thirty plus years. Our racing kennels operate in other greyhound jurisdictions around the country. Our substantial income, therefore, comes primarily from out of state, yet we reinvest it in Kansas with our farm operation, contributing to the state's agricultural economy and tax base. My family is one of the top buyers at our NGA auctions each year in Abilene, an event that contributes significant taxes to the state of Kansas through its sales. My family employs several people out of state who have said they would move to Kansas if we get racing back in Kansas.

I urge the committee to take into consideration the circumstances of the tracks. We must have assurance that the track will be reopened if this legislation passes. In 2007, legislation did not provide

sufficient revenues to reopen the tracks. Here we are 5 years after passage of SB 66 and none of the tracks have reopened. Both track owners agree that they need a substantial increase in the revenue percentage provided SB 66. The KGA supports the owner's effort to reopen their respective racetracks.

This bill is also about jobs and has the potential to provide at least 500 jobs at Wichita Greyhound Park and at least 400 jobs at Camptown. This does not include the potential of thousands of ancillary jobs this bill will create.

The committee will hear testimony with regards to a clear vote in Sedgwick County. The KGA fully supports this endeavor. For the greyhound industry to keep the best greyhounds in the state and to increase investment in farms, Wichita Greyhound Park must be opened.

My wife and I recently purchased a house in Abilene. We are concerned that the loss of live racing in Kansas, our family could face a difficult decision to leave the state. My wife's job helps sustain our operations as we wait for the reopening of the state's greyhound tracks.

The closure of the three racetracks in Kansas has cost our state jobs, and investment. There are two parts to the greyhound industry; Farms and Kennels.

Farms breed and raise greyhounds for live racing. That investment is significant and important to our state. Kansas is the largest producer of greyhounds for live racing in the United States.

Kennels provide the greyhounds for racing. In the kennel business, only half of the greyhounds running in a race earn money. It is a competitive process that requires the very best greyhounds to be successful. Greyhounds are highly trained athletes who require a high protein diet to perform at the highest levels. Today, Kansas kennel operators race dogs all over the country, but not in Kansas. It is expensive to run a business in West Virginia or Florida while maintaining your Kansas roots. While our successful Kennel operations do bring significant income back to the state, the jobs created and the expenses paid in another state benefit that state, not Kansas.

For the state to maximize the benefit it can receive from a vibrant greyhound industry, racetracks providing live racing must be allowed. SB 319 provides economic tools to restart this industry in a way that is most beneficial to our state.

I ask for your support for SB 319

Sincerely,

Travis Bartley