

To: Representative John Barker

From: Helping Hands Humane Society

Date: February 2021

Testimony **in Opposition to HB2199**

Submitted by Emi Griess, Communications Coordinator, Helping Hands Humane Society, Topeka, KS

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Emi Griess, and I have worked at Helping Hands Humane Society in Topeka, Kansas for over 8 years and have been a dog owner since my 8th birthday. As someone who is surrounded by dogs and people passionate about animal welfare in my personal and professional life, I can say that our Kansas community views dogs as companion animals, not as throw-away elements of sports wagering.

I am testifying against HB2199 because greyhound racing is inhumane and is not profitable. As of 2021, greyhound racing is banned in Florida, the state where in 2018, with 11 tracks operating, it was estimated a dog died every three days on a Florida track. Alabama and Texas closed their last greyhound racetracks in 2020, and Arkansas and Iowa are phasing out their active dog racing tracks, which will leave just two states with active tracks. Kansas is currently one of five states with no tracks where dog racing is still legal. Clearly, greyhound racing is on the decline, and HB2199, given the live greyhound races that would be required of racetrack gaming facilities and the legality of betting on greyhound races occurring outside the state, could move us backwards, setting our state up to lose money and gain criticism. To reflect our community's support for animal welfare, HB2199 must be amended to remove racetrack gaming facilities and prohibit betting on all greyhound races.

The dog racing industry is inhumane in several ways. Dogs are confined for 20-23 hours per day in small kennels. Racing dogs regularly suffer broken legs and other serious injuries. Many racing greyhounds test positive for drugs including cocaine; females are given anabolic steroids to prevent loss of race days when they are in heat. As a humane society worker, I can tell you that we already see far too many cases of abuse, cruelty, and neglect of dogs in our community. I cannot fathom our state supporting an industry that would add more abuse, cruelty, and neglect to innocent dogs who, if you've ever had the joy of owning a dog, you know want nothing more than to please us.

Thank you for considering my input.