



Statement By

Jo-Anne Basile, Executive Director

In Support of HB 6615

Before the General Law Committee

February 16, 2023

Co-Chairs Senator Maroney and Representative D'Agostino, Vice Chairs, Ranking Members and Honorable Members of the General Law Committee.

CT Votes for Animals (CVA) strongly urges the Committee to pass HB 6615, An Act Concerning Dog Racing. CVA is a grass roots animal advocacy organization representing over 8,000 supporters in almost every legislative district in the State.

Greyhound racing, and its attendant live lure baiting techniques, is a cruel and grossly inhumane form of gambling. CT was late getting started in racing dogs and after a relatively short period, the financial decline of the business forced CT to close its last track in 2005. According to Grey2K USA, Greyhound racing is illegal in 42 States with Oregon joining last year. Overall, the industry suffered huge financial losses and continues to decline, a reflection of the public's clear disdain for the abusive tactics associated with racing.

CT residents expressed a collective sigh of relief when the State closed its racing tracks. I believe I speak for many who would be shocked to learn a technical loophole exists in which live greyhound racing could resume without scrutiny.

HB 6615 is an opportunity to do the right thing. For CT residents, live greyhound racing ended in 2005. Passage of HB 6615 will formally close the statutory book on live greyhound racing and ensure that the promise to CT people is kept.

On behalf of all supporters of CT Votes for Animals, I urge the committee favorably pass HB 6615.

Jo-Anne Basile

Executive Director

CT Votes for Animals

info@ctvotesforanimals.org



Testimony from Susan B. Linker

Board Chair CT Votes for Animals and Chief Executive Officer, Our Companions Animal Rescue

Testimony in SUPPORT HB 6115 - AN ACT CONCERNING DOG RACING

Dear Honorable Members of the General Law Committee, I would like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to express my strong support of HB6115.

Greyhound racing is an activity that has long been recognized as a cruel and inhumane practice. Greyhounds are beautiful, gentle animals that are bred and forced to race, enduring horrible cruelties throughout their lifetimes.

These horrific animal welfare practices associated with Greyhound racing have resulted in it being illegal in 42 states, including our neighboring states, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island and Vermont.

Public awareness of the cruelty of Greyhound racing has resulted in its financial decline in Connecticut, causing its last track to close in 2005.

HB 6115 will close a loophole that exists in which greyhound racing could resume in CT. I respectfully encourage this committee to pass HB 6115 and send a strong message that we do not want greyhound racing to ever be allowed in our state again.

Name: Adria Henderson

Title:

Organization or Agency: CVA

Topic: HB06615 - AAC DOG RACING.

Supports

Testimony:

HB 6615 An Act Concerning Dog Racing While CT's greyhound racing tracks closed in 2005 without this legislation, there is nothing stopping them from reopening and restarting this cruel and inhumane practice. I support HB6615 to end, once and for all, greyhound dog racing and have CT join the 48 other states that ban dog racing.

Adria L. Henderson
12 Arlyn Ridge Road
Newtown. CT 06470

Name: Karen Laski

Title: Advisory Board Member

Organization or Agency: CT Votes for Animals

Topic: HB06615 - AAC DOG RACING.

Supports

Testimony:

Support House Bill 6615 Dog Racing

Dear Honorable Members of the General Law Committee,

Please vote to support 6615 to Ban Dog Racing in CT. It's a horrible atrocity and we can't be one of the few states to allow it. I protested the Bridgeport race track many years ago and it shut down. So many people were happy and adopted the dogs. Dog racing here should never happen again.

Thank you,

Karen Laski

Manchester

In Support of HB 6615 An Act Concerning Dog Racing

Before the General Law Committee

February 16, 2023

Co-Chairs Senator Maroney and D'Agostino, Vice Chairs and Ranking Members Cicarella and Rutigliano, Honorable Members of the General Law Committee,

I am Dr. Virginia Maxwell, Professor in the Forensic Science Department and Henry C. Lee Endowed Chair in Forensic Science at the University of New Haven, and board member of Connecticut Votes for Animals. As a professor I teach classes in the Forensic Investigation of Animal Cruelty, I guest lecture on topics related to animal cruelty, I have written book chapters and articles about animal cruelty, and I have recently co-authored a textbook entitled Investigating Animal Abuse Crime Scenes (publication date May 2023). I have approximately 30 years of experience in Forensic Science, including 15 years at the State of Connecticut Forensic Science Laboratory. I consider that I am well versed in many of the issues surrounding Greyhound racing. I would like to offer testimony in support of HB 6615 An Act Concerning Dog Racing. Please note that the opinions expressed herein are my own and do not represent the opinions of the University of New Haven.

Currently Greyhound racing has been made illegal in 42 states. In other states, including Connecticut, it remains legal though in Connecticut there are no active venues, and have not been since 2005.

As with many "sports" involving animals there is a dark side involving numerous practices that would be considered cruel, inhumane, even illegal, if they were to involve dogs in the role of companion animals. I would like to briefly address some of these practices individually.

1. Confinement

The Greyhounds used in dog racing live in extreme confinement for the periods during which they are neither training nor racing. Their homes are stacked metal cages in warehouse-type buildings, and they remain in these cages for over 20 hours per day. One of the legal crate sizes gives a dog barely enough room to stand up and turn around. The style and size of housing is reminiscent of puppy mills, battery hen cages or porcine gestational crates, all of which are considered to be forms of cruelty and have been made illegal in many states.

2. Transportation

Transportation of Greyhounds has few, if any, regulations. Though specially outfitted vehicles are available, they are not required to be temperature regulated nor are the conditions under which the dogs may be transported, such as excessively hot or cold weather.

3. Injuries and death during training and racing

From 2010 – 2019, nearly 11,000 dogs were injured or killed during races in the United States. The most common injury was a broken leg, but broken necks, backs, and head trauma, including fractured skulls, also occurred. Though injury and death rate reporting are not mandatory in all states, those states that do report indicate that around 5% of these incidents result in instant death or post-race euthanasia. Dog fighting also results in serious injury and death for the animals, either savagely killed in the pit, or through brutal means at the hands of their owners later.

4. Drugs

While we tend to think of human athletes when we consider performance enhancing drugs, sadly trainers subject their canine athletes to similar drugs, many of which have no recognized veterinary use. Drugs that have been found in Greyhounds include cocaine, amphetamine, caffeine, steroids, codeine, morphine, betablockers and barbiturates. Further one dog was found to have dimethyl sulfoxide, an industrial solvent in their system. Testosterone is routinely used on female dog to disrupt estrus to prevent the loss of valuable “racing days”. This use of drugs is consistent with that of dog fighting where performance enhancing drugs and supplements are common as well as the illegal use of veterinary drugs to treat injured dogs so they can fight again.

5. Neglect

Though racing dogs, being a source of income, might be expected to receive good care and attention, acts of cruelty and neglect are well-documented in the industry. Cases include flea and tick infestations, starvation, withholding emergency veterinary care, deceased Greyhounds left in enclosures with living ones, embedded collars, and non-accidental injuries. All the acts reported would fall under state animal cruelty laws, many felonies, in the states in which they occurred.

6. Live lures

Greyhounds are encouraged to race using lures designed to mimic small animals. Documented cases exist of live animals, such as rabbits, being used in place of the lures. Once caught, the lure animals are killed by the dogs. This follows a similar training style to the use of bait animals in dog fighting.

7. Feeding practices

Racing Greyhounds are routinely fed meat that is referred to as 4-D meat. The 4 D’s are “diseased”, “down”, “dead” and “disabled” and refer to the livestock from which the meat came; meat that is considered not fit for human consumption. Due to its source 4-D meat is often contaminated with pathogenic micro-organisms. While these organisms, including *salmonella* and *E.coli*, could be killed by cooking, for racing performance purposes, the meat is typically served raw. In addition to pathogens, 4-D meat is often contaminated with measurable levels of drugs from treatments given to the livestock who are the source of the meat, further compounding the impact of the drugs knowingly given to the dogs.

8. Industry Self-Regulation

Greyhound racing is primarily regulated by state agencies but is also under the auspices of the National Greyhound Association (NGA) which claims to “police” the industry. The sad track record of cruelty, neglect and other harmful practices indicates that this self-

regulation is failing. Further there are numerous reports of cover ups by the NGA which also has responsibility for promoting the industry, a clear conflict of interest.

Though other issues certainly exist in Greyhound racing I wish to be respectful of the committee's time. Therefore, in closing I would urge the Honorable Members of the Committee to support HB 6615 and prohibit greyhound racing in Connecticut. While it can be argued that there are no operational venues, and none have existed since 2005, while the industry remains legal there are no obstacles to the re-emergence of Greyhound racing in this state. Please join our neighbors in the Northeast and shut this practice down for good.

I respectfully urge the Committee's support to stop this brutal form of gambling by supporting HB 6615.