



Senate of Pennsylvania

January 12, 2009

TO: ALL SENATORS

FROM: Stewart J. Greenleaf

Stewart

SB 214

SUBJECT: Cosponsorship -- **Simulcasting greyhound races**

I am reintroducing **Senate Bill 231**, amending the Crimes Code, Title 18 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, to make it a crime to transmit or receive interstate or intrastate simulcasting of greyhound races.

In 2004 the General Assembly enacted legislation prohibiting greyhound racing in Pennsylvania. 2004 Act 36 added section 7516 to the Crimes Code to make it a misdemeanor of the first degree for a person to hold, conduct or operate a greyhound race for public exhibition. The legislation I am reintroducing amends section 7516 to also make it a misdemeanor of the first degree for a person to transmit or receive interstate or intrastate simulcasting of a greyhound race for commercial purposes.

According to Citizens Against Greyhound Racing (CAGR), as of November 2008, 32 greyhound racetracks in 11 states currently conduct live races. These states are: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Texas, West Virginia and Wisconsin. On November 4, 2008, the voters in Massachusetts banned dog racing. The ban goes into effect January 1, 2010, which will result in the closing of two tracks in Massachusetts.

Many tracks with live racing simulcast their races to other tracks, casinos and off-track betting parlors around the country. Even though live greyhound racing is illegal in eight states, simulcasting is illegal in only five of these states. While some tracks have reduced or discontinued live greyhound racing over the years, the tracks remain open for simulcast races. For example, Shoreline Star in Connecticut closed its doors to live greyhound racing in 2006 but now markets itself as an entertainment complex for the simulcasting of greyhound racing.

The reasons why the General Assembly prohibited greyhound racing apply as well to simulcasting greyhound races. The racing industry still destroys an average of 9,000 dogs each year when they are no longer profitable. Approximately 14,000 are saved by rescue organizations that bear the cost of caring for these dogs – including medical expenses from injuries incurred while racing. While live racing is on the decline, revenues from simulcasting work to financially support this business but in no way improve the outcome for the dogs.

A revolving baseline of 1,000 dogs is required to sustain a mid-sized racetrack operation. New greyhounds are continually entering the system to replace greyhounds that grade-off due to injury, age or poor performance. In 2007, 22,924 greyhounds were born; 20,227 were registered to race. Approximately, 14,000 graded-off greyhounds were rescued and adopted. An estimated 9,000 greyhounds were killed; the vast majority of these greyhounds were “retirees” who were not rescued and the rest were puppies that did not make the grade.

The Senate passed this legislation during a prior session.

If you would like to cosponsor this legislation, please contact Tyra Wallace of my office by calling (717) 787-6599 or e-mailing her at twallace@pasen.gov.