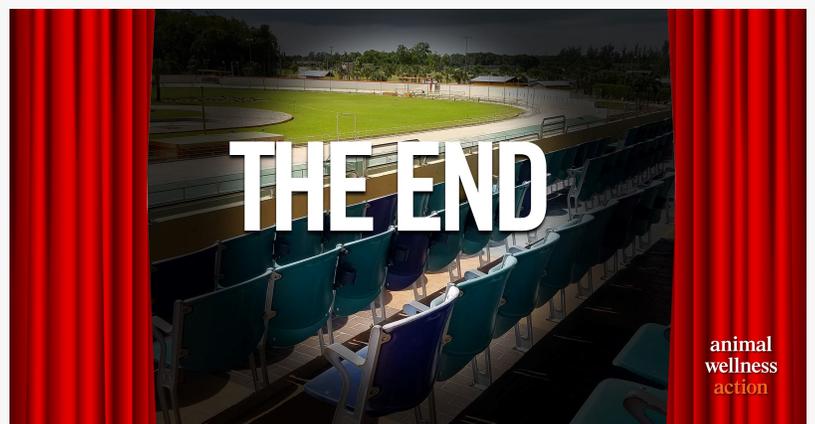


Federal Legislation Introduced to Ban Greyhound Racing, Simulcasting, Live-Lure Training

Bill Comes in Wake of Track Closures, Investigation Exposing Extreme Cruelty

WASHINGTON, D.C., UNITED STATES, May 19, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Animal Wellness Action and GREY2K USA Worldwide applauded Reps. Tony Cárdenas, D-Calif., Mike Waltz, R-Fla., Steve Cohen, D-Tenn., Elvira Salazar, R-Fla, Stephanie Murphy, D-Fla., and Brian Fitzpatrick, R-Penn., for introducing legislation to phase out commercial greyhound racing and simulcasting of dog racing. The Greyhound Protection Act also bans the use of live animals for training of greyhounds.



Greyhound Protection Act | Photo: Craig Swanson

“Greyhound racing has become exceedingly unpopular with Americans and is in a death spiral,” said Wayne Pacelle, president of Animal Wellness Action and the Center for a Humane Economy. This bill allows for a managed phase-out of the activity to enable planning to provide homes for the dogs and certainty for the small group of remaining owners, workers, and breeders in the industry.

“Dog racing is cruel from start to finish,” noted Christine A. Dorchak, president and general counsel of GREY2K USA. “This is an antiquated industry with a compulsion for cruelty.”

Cardenas’ bill comes in the wake of a 2020 investigation by GREY2K USA that exposed live lure training in Oklahoma, Kansas, and Texas, with “farms” training dogs by allowing them to tear apart rabbits. During the course of an investigation that spanned nearly a year, GREY2K USA documented illegal greyhound training at breeding farms in three states, including at a property that is only two miles from the National Greyhound Association headquarters in Abilene, Kansas. The details of this investigation and relevant footage have been provided to law enforcement officials and regulators in Arkansas, Florida, Iowa, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, and West Virginia.

The bill also comes after a series of track closure announcements in the United States. In June of 2020, Texas's last track became the most recent one to announce an end to live racing. Alabama's lone track announced an end to live racing effective in April 2020. And just months before, Arkansas's Southland track announced will phase out operations over the next two years.

Those announcements came not long after Florida voters approved Amendment 13, which banned all live racing in the state by the end of 2020. Floridians approved the measure with well more than a two-to-one margin in the industry's hub. Just prior to the launch of the ballot measure campaign, Florida had 12 of the 18 operating tracks in the United States.

"Greyhound racing is cruel and must end," said Rep. Tony Cárdenas, D-Calif. "These docile animals are kept in stacked cages for 20 hours or more a day and are subjected to brutal training practices and races, facing the risk of injury and death at every turn. My bipartisan bill allows for a sensible wind-down of an already-declining industry that will ultimately outlaw greyhound racing. As a longtime animal welfare advocate, I am always committed to always speaking up for the voiceless."

"Greyhound racing has an inhumane track record," said Rep. Michael Waltz, R-Fla. "The State of Florida, like nearly all states, has banned greyhound racing because Floridians respect our canine friends. I'm proud to co-lead this legislation to ensure the health and safety of dogs across the country."

"I'm proud to reintroduce this measure, which will permit the managed winddown of an industry in decline and provide protection for the graceful racing dogs that made it possible. As a longtime animal protection advocate, I support the effort to responsibly end this inhumane sport," said Rep. Steve Cohen, D-Tenn., a longtime member of the Congressional Animal Protection Caucus.

"Florida was once the mecca of greyhound racing before the state voted overwhelmingly to end this cruel and inhumane practice," said Rep. Elvira Salazar, D-Fla. "The Greyhound Protection Act is the last lap in transitioning us away from this traumatic sport and finally treating these dogs with compassion."

"Greyhound racing is an outdated practice that promotes animal cruelty," said Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick, R-Pa. "As a member of the bipartisan Congressional Animal Protection Caucus, I'm committed to ensuring our government is doing its part to always promote animal welfare."

Today, outside of Florida, only four tracks operate, and the only two without a definite timeline to end live racing are in West Virginia. The tracks, based in Charleston and Wheeling, are owned by Delaware North, a privately held company based in Buffalo and built around gambling and food service. A generation ago, there were 60 tracks in the United States, so the decline of racing has been precipitous.

Dogs used for racing are kept confined in stacked metal cages for up to 23 hours a day. When let out to race, they suffer serious injuries including broken legs and backs, crushed skulls, and paralysis. State records also show greyhounds testing for serious drugs, including cocaine and anabolic steroids. Greyhound racing survived for as long as it has only because of state subsidies that enabled them to operate. At the few tracks that remain, the dogs perform in front of nearly empty bleachers. With so few states operating tracks, animal welfare concerns will become even more pressing because of threadbare operations that will have even less ability to care for the dogs.

The federal government has authority on this subject because dogs are bred and transported across state lines for racing and races are broadcast to numerous states for simulcast gambling. The bill amends the Wire Act to achieve its purposes of ending greyhound racing and live-lure training.

The Greyhound Protection Act has been endorsed by more than a hundred animal protection groups and community leaders, including 70 local animal shelters from 31 states. Lead endorsers are Animal Wellness Action, GREY2K USA and the Center for a Humane Economy, and other notable endorsers include Stop Predatory Gambling, the Federation of Humane Organizations of West Virginia, Eastwood Ranch Rescue, the National Greyhound Adoption Program, the National Humane Education Society, Dumb Friends League, Alaqua Animal Refuge and Best Friends Animal Society.

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Animal Wellness Action (Action) is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(4) organization with a mission of helping animals by promoting legal standards forbidding cruelty. We champion causes that alleviate the suffering of companion animals, farm animals, and wildlife. We advocate for policies to stop dogfighting and cockfighting and other forms of malicious cruelty and to confront factory farming and other systemic forms of animal exploitation. To prevent cruelty, we promote enacting good public policies, and we work to enforce those policies. To enact good laws, we must elect good lawmakers, and that's why we remind voters which candidates care about our issues and which ones don't. We believe helping animals helps us all.

The Animal Wellness Foundation is a Los Angeles-based private charitable organization with a mission of helping animals by making veterinary care available to everyone with a pet, regardless of economic ability. We organize rescue efforts and medical services for dogs and cats in need and help homeless pets find a loving caregiver. We are advocates for getting veterinarians to the front lines of the animal welfare movement; promoting responsible pet ownership; and vaccinating animals against infectious diseases such as distemper. We also support policies that prevent animal cruelty and that alleviate suffering. We believe helping animals helps us all.

GREY2K USA Worldwide is the largest greyhound protection organization in the United States with more than 250,000 supporters. As a non-profit organization, the group promotes the

adoption of ex-racers and works to pass laws to end the cruelty of dog racing around the world. For more information, visit GREY2KUSA.org.

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