

General Law Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-132

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING DOG RACING.

Vote Date: 3/7/2024

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/20/2024

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

General Law Committee

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REASONS FOR BILL:

Under current Connecticut statutes a greyhound track would be allowed to open in the state. This bill will remove the statute allowing for the authorization of a track to open in our state. In the United States, there are currently 42 states that have banned greyhound racing. It is documented that greyhounds are subjected to cruel and inhumane treatment in the world of racing. They are also trained using live bait, this causes terror and death to the animal used which are usually jack rabbits. This bill will allow simulcast betting to take place, which is regulated by DCP.

There have been similar bills HB6048 in 2021 and HB5174 in 2022 that were passed by the Public Safety and Security Committee and were then passed by the Connecticut House of Representatives with bipartisan support. In 2023 the General Law Committee passed HB6615 and then was passed by the Connecticut House of Representatives again with bipartisan support.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None Expressed

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Representative Nicole Klarides-Ditria, House of Representatives, State of Connecticut

Representative Nicole Klarides-Ditria supports this bill. She is Co-Chair of the Animal Welfare Caucus and feels this is an important piece of legislation. Many states within our country prohibit the cruel unnecessary sport of racing greyhounds. The hard work of animal advocacy groups has brought us to the realization that our canine friends deserve better treatment than what they come to experience as racing dogs. She is hopeful greyhound racing will be prohibited in our state.

Annie Hornish, Connecticut Senior State Director, The Humane Society of the United States

Ms. Hornish supports this bill. This bill is technical, but it removes from statute the allowance of an activity that ended in Connecticut in 2005. Dog racing is associated with significant animal cruelty. Racing greyhounds suffer extreme confinement, drugging, injuries and premature death are all too common. The practice of using small animals to live lure training suffer in terror before they are killed. There are 42 states that have banned greyhound racing and West Virginia is the only state with an active track. Greyhound racing is still legal in Connecticut and this bill will stop racing from being revived in our state.

Collette Griffin, Board Chair, CT Votes for Animals

Ms. Griffin supports this bill. Greyhound racing is a cruel and inhumane activity. Greyhounds endure lives of confinement in cages barely large enough to stand up or turn around, suffer serious injuries while racing and are killed when they become unprofitable. The practice of live lure training uses small animals such as rabbits and baby pigs to enhance a dog's chase instinct. There has not been an active dog racetrack in Connecticut in almost 20 years. Many Connecticut residents would be shocked to learn a technical loophole exists to allow racing to resume in the state. Dog racing is illegal in 42 states and practiced in only one: West Virginia. Currently under current statute a dog racetrack could be reopened in Connecticut. This bill would make greyhound racing illegal in the state.

Ashley Blake, Golden Retriever Owner

Ms. Blake supports this bill. She would never want her dog to race. If a race was sponsored by the AKC she would approve.

Caitrin Cassidy, Student, Ledyard High School

Ms. Cassidy supports this bill. As a sophomore at Ledyard High School, she is working on a Civic Action Project regarding the rights of animals, specifically the rights of animals bred for consumption. She does however want to bring attention to the rights of all animals. Racing is very dangerous to the dogs involved. The treatment of these animals is inhumane. Connecticut should take the next step to protecting these animals and prevent further trauma to the racing dogs by banning greyhound racing tracks in the state.

Joseph DeLallo

Mr. DeLallo supports this bill. At the age of 7, his father would take him to dog racing in New Haven. At that age he enjoyed the racing until later in life he saw the horrors of dog racing. His daughter works for a veterinarian, and she wrote a paper in college about the dog racing, and it brought him to tears. This woke college student at the age of 22 changed his opinion on the matter.

Christine A. Dorchak, Esq., President and General Counsel, Grey2K USA Worldwide

Attorney Dorchak supports this bill. Greyhound racing was introduced to Connecticut in 1976, since 2001 forty-six tracks have closed and currently only two remain open nationwide. Though the greyhound racing tracks closed in Connecticut in 2005, it is still legal in the state. Grey2K would like to see that loophole closed. The treatment of racing greyhounds is inhumane, and thousands of dogs are destroyed each year when they are no longer profitable. The Plainfield track was known to be the last stop for dogs that were older and injury-prone dogs, until AG Richard Blumenthal stepped in to require the track to account for each dog and for their orderly release to waiting adopters. It is time to repeal the authorization for dog racing from the state code, just as it has been in 42 other states.

Karen Laski, Glastonbury, CT

Ms. Laski supports this bill. This bill passed the house last year, but there was not enough time to go for a final vote in the Senate. Please be sure this bill goes swiftly in both chambers and passes.

Keeley Mangeno

Ms. Mangeno supports this bill. According to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) every year thousands of greyhounds are killed in the USA as they lack winning potential due to injuries or are no longer competitive. The treatment of racing greyhounds is inhumane.

Lewis Shakerman

Mr. Shakerman supports this bill. We need to recognize the importance of man's best friend.

Deb Sutfin

Ms. Sutfin supports this bill.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Blake Fitzgerald, Alternative Priorities

Mr. Fitzgerald opposes this bill. He states that the legislature should not worry about this. It is a "feel good bill" which meets a small constituency of Uber wealthy and over educated elites. Government should stick to the constitution and originalism. What is to stop him from racing his dog around his yard his backyard with a neighbor's dog? Will the police stop him? He thinks not.

Reported by: Bonnie Gray, Assistant Clerk

Date: 3/13/24