

Greyhound injury bill passes Florida Senate committee

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(Photo: Jack Hardman/The News-Press)

A Senate committee Wednesday approved a bill that would require reports to be filed with the state about injuries to racing greyhounds. The bill (SB 2), sponsored by Sen. Eleanor Sobel, D-Hollywood, is expected to be one of the first measures passed by the full Senate when the annual legislative session starts in March.

The bill is named the "Victoria Q. Gaetz Racing Greyhound Protection Act," after animal-rights supporter Vicky Gaetz, the wife of Sen. Don Gaetz, R-Niceville.

Under the proposal, injuries to racing greyhounds would have to be reported to the state Division of Pari-Mutuel Wagering within seven days by track veterinarians or owners, trainers or kennel operators, depending on where the injury occurs. Before the Senate Regulated Industries Committee approved the measure Wednesday, Sobel said supporters are not "planning to build a whole new bureaucracy to investigate dog injuries" and estimated that carrying out the bill would cost about \$60,000.

Also, she said the state already requires reporting of greyhound deaths. Jack Cory, a lobbyist for the Florida Greyhound Association and the National Greyhound Association, expressed support for the bill if additions are made to better protect greyhounds, such as steps to make sure tracks are properly maintained for greyhound safety. The Florida Greyhound Association represents groups such as breeders, owners and kennel operators.