Florida is a closely divided state politically, as evidenced in the whisker-thin margins separating its Senate and gubernatorial candidates in this month’s midterm elections. But red and blue voters in the Sunshine State have agreed overwhelmingly on one point - they want to see an end to dog racing.

By a margin close to 70 percent, Florida voters assented to a plan Nov. 6 that would close the 12 dog tracks operating in the state by the end of 2020. With the referendum’s approval, Florida became the 41st state to prohibit dog racing. West Virginia is one of the five remaining states that still operate dog tracks, along with Texas, Arkansas, Alabama and Iowa. Four other states - Oregon, Connecticut, Wisconsin and Kansas - have not yet formally banned the sport, but no dog tracks operate in any of those states.

West Virginia and the states that still allow dog racing should follow Florida's lead and ban the sport.

The campaign to outlaw dog racing in Florida was spearheaded by high-profile opponents like Hollywood legend Doris Day, and fueled by reports of greyhounds being mistreated, doped and killed. In the five years leading up to the vote, Florida required its dog tracks to report mortality data, and what it revealed was eye-opening - 438 greyhounds died in that time, succumbing from broken legs, heat exhaustion, or electrocution after being slammed into the wires that ring the tracks.

But even setting aside the apparent cruelty the canines are subject to - supporters of the industry say such reports are overblown - dog racing is an industry that could well die from lack of interest before it is formally killed off. A report released by the Spectrum Gaming Group in 2015 on dog racing in West Virginia found that attendance at dog races declined by 99 percent at the Wheeling Island track from 1983 to 2013. Back when Michael Jackson’s “Thriller” was atop the album charts and “Return of the Jedi” was fresh to movie theaters, about 1 million people watched dog races at Wheeling Island over the course of a year; 30 years later, the number was down to 13,000. To put that in perspective, that doesn’t even match the average attendance at a single Pittsburgh Penguins game.

Spectrum Gaming Group also reported that bets on dog races plummeted from $35 million in 2004 to $16 million by 2013. Most gamblers have been lured away from dog tracks by the slot machines and table games they find within casinos.

There have been attempts in recent years to eliminate West Virginia’s $15 million annual subsidies to the dog racing industry, and to eliminate the requirement that Wheeling Island and the Mardi Gras Casino and Resort outside Charleston, W.Va., operate dog tracks in order to keep their licenses for video lottery and table games. Perhaps the vote in Florida will lead Mountain State legislators to redouble their efforts.

We no longer allow dogfighting, cockfighting and other sports that are now deemed cruel and inhumane. It’s time to do the same with dog racing.

Carey Theil, the executive director of Massachusetts-based advocacy group Grey2K USA, described dog racing this way in a 2015 interview with the Observer-Reporter: “It’s a relic of the early 20th century. ... Casinos give money to subsidize a product they don’t want, they lose money on and that people aren’t interested in.”