

# Greyhound purse fund cut in half in new budget

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By **Jeff Jenkins** in News | June 14, 2016 at 5:20PM

**CHARLESTON, W.Va.** — The state budget bill passed by state lawmakers Tuesday includes a move that cuts in half the money in the greyhound racing purse fund.

The bill (SB1013) takes what's been an \$8 million fund down to \$4 million. The money was moved to another part of the budget to help fill the projected \$270 million revenue hole.

Opponents of the move, including Sen. Herb Snyder (D-Jefferson), called it a step toward eliminating greyhound racing at casinos in Wheeling and Nitro.

“It’s inhumane to just reach into this industry. We dagger through the heart of a live racing industry,” Snyder said. “July 1 comes and nearly half of their purse money is gone. What’s it going to do to that industry?”



Martin Valent/WV Legislative Photography  
Jefferson County State Sen. Herb Snyder, left, said cutting the purse fund in half was inhumane.

Sen. Chris Walters (R-Putnam) explored defunding greyhound racing during the regular legislative session earlier this year. He said there’s probably a better approach than the one taken in the new budget.

“It would have been better than just line-iteming that out in the budget to actually set forward a plan to decouple (separating the racing and the casinos) and let business decisions be made. But it was something accessible in the budget and the House went ahead and struck it out,” Walters said.

The new budget still has an \$11 million allocation for greyhound racing with \$7 million going to the breeders fund and \$4 million to the purse fund. The greyhound racing industry is going to have figure out a way to get things done with fewer dollars, Walters said.

“They’re going have to find out a way to race, to bring more people in, with lower purse money, lower winnings, when their dogs cross the finish lines,” he said.

State law currently ties greyhound racing with Wheeling Island-Casino-Racetrack in Ohio County and Mardi Gras Casino in Nitro.



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