

Grey2K USA protest calls for end to greyhound racing

Ashley Collins, ashley.collins@naplesnews.com; 239-213-6029 Published 6:59 p.m. ET Jan. 21, 2017 | Updated 7:13 p.m. ET Jan. 21, 2017



5 Photos



(Photo: Dorothy Edwards / Staff)

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Protesters rallied Saturday afternoon in Bonita Springs to put an end to greyhound racing in Florida.

About 20 demonstrators stood for an hour on the sidewalk of Bonita Beach Road outside [Naples-Fort Myers Track and Entertainment Center](#) holding signs that read, "Greyhound racing kills" and "End dog racing in Florida."

Chuck Danielian, 73, a local volunteer with [Grey2K USA Worldwide](#), a nonprofit that advocates for greyhounds, has worked to raise awareness and push the state of Florida to protect greyhounds since 2008. He and fellow activists rally together three times a year outside the track.

"We're doing a peaceful protest to let people know that we're not fans of the racetrack," said Danielian, who wore a patriotic bandanna and held a sign as passing motorists honked their horns.

Izzy Havenick, vice president of public affairs for the track's ownership group, said the local activists aren't protesting at the right place.

"They have a right to protest...but should be talking to Legislature in Florida," Havenick said.

About 410 racing "performances" take place at the local greyhound racetrack, he added: "We just provide the venue and do what the state says."

All of Saturday's activists agreed that greyhound racing is inhumane and has to be stopped. Florida is one of six states where dog racing is still legal and active. Meanwhile, dog racing is illegal in 40 states, according to Grey2K USA.



A group of GREY2K USA Worldwide volunteers protest outside of the Naples-Ft. Myers Greyhound Race Track in Bonita Springs on Saturday, Jan. 21, 2017. (Photo: Dorothy Edwards/Naples Daily News)

The local activists are pushing for those six states, Florida specifically, to allow the operation of card rooms without requiring greyhound racing and to require racing dog injuries be reported to the state.

Danielian said nothing much has changed since he started advocating for greyhounds.

"Every year, it's like the same thing. A bill passes through to different committees and then all of a sudden someone puts an amendment on it that's ridiculous and then everybody is going, 'I can't vote for that,'" Danielian said.

He hopes the tide turns soon with news of a proposed gambling [bill](#) earlier this month filed by Florida Sen. Bill Galvano, R-Bradento.

The bill allows, among other things, slot machines in eight counties and gives tracks permission to get rid of greyhound and horse racing and to focus more on card rooms and slot machines.

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