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## House Bill 2173 could bring greyhound racing back to Kansas

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The House Federal and State Affairs Committee passed a bill 11-10 yesterday that could give an incentive for race track owners to open facilities and add slot machines. Representatives in attendance at the vote sighted job creation as a reason to support the bill. Animal Rights advocates fear, if HB2173 receives final approval, it could allow track owners to use slot machine subsidies to fund greyhound race tracks.

"At the very least just amend the bill and pull out the greyhound racing piece," said Kate Meghji the President of the Animals as Pets Coalition of Kansas. "That's the important thing. It's an inhumane sport and I don't think we want Kansas to be one of only six states that allow greyhound racing. Let's not be the seventh."

As far as finances are concerned, greyhound racing fell in popularity in Kansas when Missouri riverboat casinos came about. Since then, several other casinos have been built that could prevent track owners from making significant profits. There are three race tracks in Kansas that potentially could open under the new law.

A Lawrence resident who rescued a greyhound deemed not fast enough to race, recalls his friend and pet, Casey.

"Casey in his term, he was in three maiden races and they use those to screen the dogs to see which are the top racers and which are not," explained Larry Grecian. "Him being just a few seconds too slow...they decided that he should be put down."

Grecian says he wasn't always against racing. There was a time he enjoyed going to the race track, long before he realized what he shares the greyhounds went through.

"I went to a greyhound racing track years before I owned Casey and years before I knew what a cruel industry it was and I loved to see the dogs run and they are bred to run, but they are not meant to run and be abused like they are," Grecian said.

Those opposing the bill should reach out to their local representative and tell them to vote no on the bill or ask that the portion on greyhound racing be removed.

No word on when the bill will go to the full house.

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