

Thursday December 2, 2021

Re: Ending needless animal cruelty by supporting the Greyhound Protection Act

Dear Congressperson,

As the first Australian politician elected to parliament on an animal protection platform, I urge you to help end the cruel industry of greyhound racing by supporting the U.S. Greyhound Protection Act, sponsored in congress by Representative Tony Cárdenas.

I recently joined over thirty international animal protection organisations in signing my name on a letter that was sent to you and every other congress member urging you to endorse the Greyhound Protection Act, but I wanted to take the time to reach out to you personally in order to explain exactly why this bill is so importance, and just how a vote in support of the act will positively impact greyhounds not just in the United States of America, but Australia, too.

I write to you from New South Wales, a state of Australia that infamously backflipped on its ban of greyhound racing in 2016. Since my election to New South Wales Parliament in 2015, I have campaigned strongly for an end to greyhound racing, and have seen time and time again just how horrific this cruel industry is.

In 2015, Australia was shocked when a national television program revealed confronting footage of live piglets, possums, and rabbits being used to “blood” greyhounds. During secret sessions, these animals were used as live bait, and torn to pieces by greyhounds; dogs that, too, were victims to hideous cruelty. In response to the public’s outrage, the Premier of NSW banned greyhound racing, but the industry’s lobbyists soon ensured a backflip on this decision.

Since the live baiting scandal, the horrors of Australian greyhound racing have continued to come to public attention: from the discovery of mass-graves of greyhounds to the recent catastrophic injury of a dog mid-race that saw him virtually ripped open lengthwise on a moving lure. In speaking out against incidents like these, I work closely with the Coalition for the Protection of Greyhounds here in Australia, which keeps tabs on the industry and publicises the facts the industry doesn’t want the public to face. At the time of writing, 160 greyhounds have died on Australian racetrack this year alone, with over 9,000 injured. This doesn’t include the many thousands that go “missing” from the industry.

I mention what is happening here in Australia for two reasons: the first reason is that I am sure the same cruelty occurs in the American greyhound racing industry, and the second reason is that the Australian and American industries are intricately linked through online gambling: punters from across both our nations and beyond bet on greyhound races, helping to prop up an industry of unspeakable and completely avoidable animal cruelty.

In supporting the Greyhound Protection Act, you can help end this cruelty. I understand that right now you and over 400 other members of the United States Congress are preparing to vote on this bill, which would make it a federal crime to engage in commercial dog racing, including betting on Australian and other international races from America.

I cannot stress to you enough the importance and power your decision will have. In banning greyhound racing in America, you will set a cultural and financial precedent that will directly

influence the greyhound racing industry in Australia, as well as the handful of other nations that still allow this so-called "sport" to continue.

I understand that greyhound racing is already banned in the majority of the 50 U.S. states. It is clear the end of the industry is near, and I urge you to be on the right side of history when you go to vote on the Greyhound Protection Act.

In supporting the Greyhound Protection Act, you will be in very good company. If the United States of America bans commercial dog racing, there will be just six nations in the world who support this legalised form of animal cruelty.

Even in those countries where greyhound racing is legal, such as Australia, we know the industry has already started its terminal decline. It is a mortifying fact that my state of New South Wales is an international outlier in our fervid support of this cruel industry; we have almost the same number of greyhound tracks (32) as there are in the UK, US and NZ combined (34). But even in New South Wales, attendance at greyhound races has dropped more than 50 per cent in the past decade alone. Even more importantly, the Coalition for the Protection of Greyhounds reports that 80 per cent of racing greyhound breeders, owners, and trainers are over the age of sixty-five, and that young people are failing to enter the industry. It is only a matter of time before the industry cannot sustain itself.

The social license of greyhound racing has long since expired. Here in New South Wales, just this year, a parliamentary inquiry was called to investigate the industry's welfare body, the Greyhound Welfare Integrity Commission, and the evidence presented has not surprised me. In the halls of New South Wales Parliament, I can feel the tide turning, and the industry is running scared.

With greyhound racing banned in 41 U.S. states already, I can see America is already on the right path. As the greyhounds of America are liberated from their kennels, state by state, I want to remind you that the world is looking to America for a cue: one that will signal the end of greyhound racing the world over. So as you go to vote on the historic bill that is the Greyhound Protection Act, I urge you to reject animal cruelty and vote with the love and loyalty of man's best friend in mind.

Thank you in advance for supporting an end to greyhound racing, and for taking the time to read my letter. Should you want more information about the Australian greyhound racing industry, please don't hesitate to write back. I would be happy to meet with you online or speak over the phone.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark Peas". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

The Hon. Mark Pearson MLC

Animal Justice Party

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