

GREYHOUND PROTECTION ACT OF 2020

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

To amend the Wire Act to clarify that gambling on commercial greyhound racing and field coursing using wire communication technology is prohibited.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. CÁRDENAS introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To amend the Wire Act to clarify that gambling on commercial greyhound racing and field coursing using wire communication technology is prohibited.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Greyhound Protection
5 Act of 2020”.

6 **SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL FINDINGS AND POLICY.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds the following:

8 (1) Greyhounds have existed for thousands of
9 years and are the only canines mentioned by name
10 in the Bible.

1 (2) Commercial greyhound racing was first le-
2 galized in Florida in 1931.

3 (3) Modern racetracks require internet-based
4 wire communications to process bets and wagers,
5 calculate odds, broadcast races, announce results,
6 and pay winnings to gamblers.

7 (4) Public records reveal that some greyhounds
8 used for live commercial racing suffer serious inju-
9 ries including broken backs, broken necks, head
10 trauma, paralysis, seizures, and electrocution.

11 (5) State records show that some racing grey-
12 hounds test positive for drugs including cocaine, am-
13 phetamines, barbituates, opioids, and steroids.

14 (6) State investigatory files document that rac-
15 ing greyhounds are kept confined for 20-23 hours a
16 day in stacked, metal cages, typically with little op-
17 portunity to socialize with other dogs.

18 (7) Many small animals, including but not lim-
19 ited to rabbits and hares, are bought, sold, delivered,
20 transported, and received in interstate and foreign
21 commerce for use as live bait in the training of rac-
22 ing greyhounds and in open field coursing.

23 (8) Typically, animals used in the live lure
24 training of greyhounds may be dragged on ropes,
25 hung from a horizontal pole which rotates around a

1 training track or simply set loose to be chased and
2 mauled. Alive or dead, helpless bait animals may be
3 used repeatedly until they are torn apart.

4 (9) Live lure training is prohibited in more
5 than a dozen States, but there is no Federal statute.
6 In the late 1970's, the National Greyhound Associa-
7 tion, a membership organization representing breed-
8 ers, trainers and other industry participants, an-
9 nounced a policy against live lure training in order
10 to convince then-Senators Birch Bayh and Robert
11 Dole to withdraw their proposed legislation.

12 (10) Open field coursing preceded commercial
13 dog racing and is an activity in which greyhounds or
14 other sighthounds are released to pursue and kill
15 bait animals, often in a fenced area. Greyhounds
16 often collide and suffer injuries in the chase.

17 (11) Dog owners travel from multiple States
18 and countries to compete and win prizes and some-
19 times gamble on open field coursing events.

20 (12) As with commercial greyhound racing,
21 internet sites are used to promote coursing tour-
22 naments and post results to a worldwide audience.

23 (13) The National Field Coursing Association is
24 the umbrella group for coursing clubs nationwide
25 and had 12 clubs in California as of 2006.

1 (14) Open field coursing is illegal in as many
2 as 12 States.

3 (15) Open field coursing was prohibited as a
4 blood sport in Scotland in 2002 and in the United
5 Kingdom in 2004.

6 (16) Twenty-five years ago, there were 60 grey-
7 hound tracks in the United States. Once a voter-ap-
8 proved ballot measure prohibiting greyhound racing
9 takes full effect in Florida in 2020 and the vol-
10 untary shut down of Southland Park in Arkansas
11 takes place as of 2022, no more than 5 tracks will
12 remain throughout the country.

13 (17) According to the State of Florida, track
14 owners had been collectively losing more than \$30
15 million annually because of sagging attendance and
16 decreased wagering. According to a State-commis-
17 sioned report, the State spent more money regu-
18 lating the industry in its national hub than it gen-
19 erated in tax revenue.

20 (18) As of December 31, 2022, live commercial
21 dog racing will be illegal in 41 States. This dying in-
22 dustry will remain legal and operational in no more
23 than 4 States.

24 (b) POLICY.—It is the policy of the Congress in this
25 chapter to prohibit the use of wire communications for the

1 purpose of gambling on live, commercial greyhound racing
2 and open field coursing events and to prohibit the trans-
3 port of animals including but not limited to greyhounds,
4 rabbits, and hares in interstate and foreign commerce in
5 furtherance of these activities.

6 **SEC. 3. PROTECTION OF GREYHOUNDS.**

7 Section 1084 of title 18, United States Code, is
8 amended by adding at the end the following new section:

9 “(f) Nothing contained in this section shall be con-
10 strued to authorize gambling on commercial greyhound
11 racing taking place domestically or internationally using
12 wire communications or to permit the transport of animals
13 for the purpose of conducting or furthering commercial
14 dog racing, live lure training or field coursing.”.

15 **SEC. 4. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**

16 Nothing in this Act, or the amendments made by this
17 Act, shall be construed—

18 (1) to preempt any State law prohibiting gam-
19 bling or protecting the welfare of animals including
20 but not limited to greyhounds, rabbits, and hares; or

21 (2) to alter, limit, or extend the relationship be-
22 tween the Interstate Horseracing Act of 1978 (15
23 U.S.C. 3001 et seq.) as it relates to horse racing
24 and other Federal laws in effect on the date of en-
25 actment of this Act.

1 SEC. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE.

2 The amendment made by section 3 shall takes effect
3 on December 31, 2022.