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# GREY2K USA

## MEMORANDUM

On Election Day, voters overwhelmingly approved an end to dog racing by a margin of 56-44%. Nearly 300 of 351 cities and towns "voted for the dogs." Now is the time to focus on providing assistance to any effected workers.

### WHAT DOES HB 1856, THE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES ACT DO?

The Economic Opportunities Act establishes a fund to benefit employees of Raynham and Wonderland Greyhound Parks with retraining and financial assistance as dog racing is phased out this year.

### WHY IS HB 1856 NECESSARY?

Under Question 3, dog racing becomes illegal in Massachusetts as of January 1, 2010. According to the Massachusetts Department of Labor and Workforce development, several hundred people were employed at dog tracks last year.

Since both commercial dog tracks sit on valuable property, they can now be redeveloped as shopping centers, supermarkets or office parks, but workers will be in need of more immediate assistance.

### WHO SUPPORTS THE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES ACT?

**Representative Carl Sciortino** is the chief sponsor of this measure, as requested by the Committee to Protect Dogs, whose members include GREY2K USA, the MSPCA-Angell and the Humane Society of the United States.

### HOW WILL WORKERS RECEIVE ASSISTANCE?

There will be no new cost to the state. Under the language of this measure, state monies now distributed to track owners under the statutory Greyhound Promotional Trust Fund and the Greyhound Capital Improvements Trust Fund will be redirected to a new **Greyhound Workers' Re-training and Support Fund**. The new Fund will be administered by the Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

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## PROTECTING GREYHOUNDS NATIONWIDE

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# GREY2K USA

September 10, 2009

Testimony Before the Joint Committee on Economic Development and Emerging Technologies on S. 2041

By Carey Theil, Executive Director, GREY2K USA

## Part One – A Summary of Our Case in Favor of the Greyhound Protection Act

1. Overview: The case was based on provable evidence specific to Massachusetts.
  - All data is local, and specific to Raynham and Wonderland Greyhound Parks.
  - All information is recent.
  - All information is thoroughly documented. Sources include state records, industry statements, and/or reports by mainstream media organizations. For example, all photographs were taken by the Massachusetts dog tracks themselves.
2. Primary Issue #1: Greyhounds Endure Lives of Confinement
  - Both commercial dog tracks in Massachusetts require a large number of dogs in order to function. For example, according to the Massachusetts State Racing Commission, over 2,600 greyhounds competed in 2006. Because racetracks require such a large number of dogs, greyhounds are confined in individual, stacked cages perpetually with only two exceptions:
    - a. A few times per month dogs are taken from the kennel compound to the racetrack where they compete.
    - b. Four times per day, for forty-five minutes, dogs are removed from their kennels and allowed to relieve themselves. For the remaining 20 or more hours per day, greyhounds are confined in individual cages.
  - Regarding our sources for this information, the turn-out frequency is based on a letter authored by representatives of the Massachusetts Greyhound Kennel Operators and Owners that was published in various newspapers in August 2007. Regarding the length of each turnout, our source is a video clip that is posted on Wonderland Greyhound Park's website.
  - According to the State Racing Commission, the minimum dimensions for these cages are 32 inches wide by 42 inches deep and 34 inches high. According to the American Greyhound Council large greyhounds stand 30 inches tall at the shoulder. Large greyhounds cannot stand fully erect in these cages. This is supported by photographs taken by Wonderland Greyhound Park.

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- To put these cage sizes in perspective, the runs used for similarly sized dogs at the MSPCA in Boston are roughly five times larger than the cages at Massachusetts dog tracks.

### 3. Primary Issue #2: Greyhounds Suffer Serious Injuries

- Nearly 900 greyhounds have been injured in our state since 2002.
- This is according to state injury reports that are completed by racetrack veterinarians and signed under the pains and penalties of perjury.
- Nearly 80% of these injuries involved broken legs. Other reported injuries include paralysis and death from cardiac arrest.
- Most reported injuries were serious. For example, 60% of reports indicated an estimated recovery time. The average recovery time for these reports was 31 weeks. An additional 22% either indicated that the injury was career-ending or fatal. Using a categorization system created by the industry itself, through the American Greyhound Council, 57% of Massachusetts injuries were "serious," while only 3% were minor.
- These injuries tell the stories of individual dogs. For example:
  - (i) On December 5, 2008, a three-year old black greyhound named Lazy K Jarvis died after running into a wall during a race at Raynham Park and suffering paralysis.
  - (ii) On January 19, 2009 a three-year old white and black greyhound named Talsta died after suffering cardiac arrest during a race at Raynham Park.

### 4. Secondary Issue #1: Dogs Die From Mystery Illness

- In the Spring of 2005 19 greyhounds died from a mysterious illness that was later proven to be a form of horse flu that had never before jumped species. This illness caused dogs to die suddenly, including some apparently healthy dogs that died in as little as four hours.
- This new dog flu has now spread beyond the racing industry to other dogs.

### 5. Secondary Issue #2: Greyhounds are Fed the Cheapest Meat Available to Reduce Costs

- At commercial dog tracks in Massachusetts, greyhound are fed a diet based on so-called "4-D meat" from dying, diseased, disabled and dead livestock. This meat has been deemed unfit for human consumption.
- Our source for this information is Wonderland Greyhound Park's website.
- While it is true that this meat is also used to make pet foods, in that setting it is cooked to remove pathogens. The greyhound industry uses raw 4-D meat because trainers believe cooking the meat will negatively impact racing performance.
- According to an industry handbook, Care of the Racing Greyhound, 4-D meat is used because it is the "most economically feasible for the Greyhound industry at this time."

### 6. Secondary Issue #3: Dog Tests Positive for Cocaine at Wonderland

- In late 2003 and early 2004, a dog racing at Wonderland tested positive twice for cocaine.

## Part Two: Response to Opposition Arguments

Since Question 3 passed, several arguments have been in an effort to undermine the will of the voters.

1. Citizens did not understand the impact of their vote on Question 3.
  - Greyhound racing has been debated in our state for over a decade. Few issues have been debated more thoroughly.
  - In the 2008 campaign, dog track supporters spent \$650,000 in advertising against Question 3. Their television ads featured track workers asking voters to oppose the Greyhound Protection Act. This television campaign was supplemented by radio and newspaper advertising.
2. Question 3 did not really help any dogs because they will now be sent to other states.
  - Right now, the greyhounds that race in our state are bred and trained elsewhere. They then come here for a short period of time before being sent to other states.
  - If that is a bad thing, it is a bad thing that has been occurring for decades and will now end.
3. Question 3 supporters used photographs from other states and countries.
  - This is simply not true. All photographs were taken by the Massachusetts racetracks themselves. Our entire case was based on data that is specific to Massachusetts, thoroughly documented, and recent.
4. It was not fair for voters statewide to vote on the Greyhound Protection Act.
  - According to the SJC, dog racing is a matter of statewide concern. It was approved at the state level generations ago, and only could have been prohibited at the state level.

Finally, let me say that I personally worked very hard for the Greyhound Protection Act, and am proud to have been a part of this effort. We have a proud tradition in Massachusetts of passing humane laws, and this policy continues that tradition. As a resident, a voter, and someone who lives with a retired greyhound, I urge you to uphold the will of the voters on Question 3 and defeat S. 2041.

With that, I will close and take your questions.