

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3894

To amend the Animal Welfare Act to prohibit commercial greyhound racing, live lure training, and open field coursing, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 7, 2023

Mr. CARBAJAL (for himself, Mr. NUNN of Iowa, Mr. CÁRDENAS, Ms. MACE, Mrs. CHAVEZ-DEREMER, and Mr. DAVIS of North Carolina) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture

A BILL

To amend the Animal Welfare Act to prohibit commercial greyhound racing, live lure training, and open field coursing, and for other purposes.

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 2023”.

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

7 The Congress finds the following:

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

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

6 (3) Modern racetracks require internet-based
7 wire communications to process bets and wagers,
8 calculate odds, broadcast races, announce results,
9 and pay winnings to gamblers. The majority of gam-
10 bling on dog racing now occurs via simulcast and on-
11 line.

12 (4) Public records reveal that some greyhounds
13 used for live commercial racing suffer serious inju-
14 ries including broken backs, broken necks, head
15 trauma, paralysis, seizures, and electrocution.

16 (5) Regulatory records show that some racing
17 greyhounds test positive for drugs including cocaine,
18 amphetamines, barbituates, opioids, and steroids.

19 (6) State investigatory files document that rac-
20 ing greyhounds are kept confined for 20 to 23 hours
21 a day in stacked, metal cages, typically with little
22 opportunity to socialize with other dogs.

23 (7) Many small animals, including jack rabbits
24 and hares, are bought, sold, delivered, transported,
25 and received in interstate and foreign commerce for

1 use as live bait in the training of racing greyhounds
2 and in open field coursing.

3 (8) Typically, animals used in live lure training
4 of greyhounds may be dragged on ropes, hung from
5 a horizontal pole which rotates around a training
6 track, or simply set loose to be chased and mauled.
7 Alive or dead, helpless bait animals may be used re-
8 peatedly until they are torn apart.

9 (9) Live lure training is prohibited in more
10 than a dozen States, but there is no Federal statute
11 prohibiting such practice. In the late 1970s, the Na-
12 tional Greyhound Association, a membership organi-
13 zation representing breeders, trainers, and other in-
14 dustry participants, announced a policy against live
15 lure training in order to convince the late Senators
16 Birch Bayh and Robert Dole to withdraw their pro-
17 posed legislation.

18 (10) Open field coursing preceded commercial
19 dog racing and is an activity in which greyhounds or
20 other sighthounds are released to pursue and kill
21 bait animals, including jack rabbits and hares, often
22 in a fenced area. Greyhounds may collide and suffer
23 injuries in the chase.

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

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

7 (13) The National Field Coursing Association is
8 the umbrella group for coursing clubs nationwide
9 and maintained 12 clubs in California as of 2006.

10 (14) Open field coursing is illegal in as many
11 as 12 States.

12 (15) Open field coursing was prohibited as a
13 blood sport in Scotland in 2002, and in the United
14 Kingdom in 2004.

15 (16) 25 years ago, there were 60 greyhound
16 tracks in the United States. With the voter-man-
17 dated closure of 12 dog tracks in Florida and the
18 voluntary shut down of Southland Park in Arkansas
19 and Iowa Greyhound Park in 2022, only 2 tracks,
20 both in West Virginia, will remain nationwide.

21 (17) According to the State of Florida, track
22 owners had been collectively losing more than
23 \$30,000,000 annually because of sagging attendance
24 and decreased wagering. According to a State-com-
25 missioned report, the State spent more money regu-

1 lating the industry in its national hub than it gen-
2 erated in tax revenue. Similarly, nearly \$20,000,000
3 is diverted annually to subsidize the 2 West Virginia
4 tracks.

5 (18) According to State records, more than
6 10,000 greyhound injuries have been reported at
7 West Virginia racetracks since 2008. More than
8 3,500 dogs suffered broken bones during this period,
9 and at least 437 dogs died after suffering serious in-
10 juries.

11 (19) Live commercial dog racing is illegal in 42
12 States. As of December 2022, this dying industry
13 will remain legal and operational in no more than 1
14 State.

15 **SEC. 3. PROTECTION OF GREYHOUNDS.**

16 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Animal Welfare Act (7
17 U.S.C. 2131 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end
18 the following:

19 **“SEC. 30. PROTECTION OF GREYHOUNDS.**

20 “(a) IN GENERAL.—It shall be unlawful—

21 “(1) for any person to knowingly engage in
22 commercial greyhound racing, live lure training, or
23 open field coursing events in which any animal is
24 moved in interstate or foreign commerce;

1 “(2) to conduct commercial greyhound racing
2 or racing meeting where any form of betting or wa-
3 gering on the speed or ability of greyhounds occurs;

4 “(3) to conduct open field coursing or live lure
5 training with the use of any bait that is not an inan-
6 imate object;

7 “(4) to engage in or facilitate simulcast betting
8 or wagering on greyhound races in interstate or for-
9 eign commerce; and

10 “(5) for any person to knowingly sell, buy, pos-
11 sess, train, transport, deliver, or receive any animal
12 for purposes of having the animal participate in
13 commercial greyhound racing, live lure training, or
14 open field coursing events.

15 “(b) INVESTIGATIONS.—The Secretary or any other
16 person authorized by the Department shall make such in-
17 vestigations as the Secretary deems necessary to deter-
18 mine whether any person has violated or is violating any
19 provision of this section, and the Secretary may obtain the
20 assistance of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the De-
21 partment of the Treasury, or other law enforcement agen-
22 cies of the United States, and State and local govern-
23 mental agencies, in the conduct of such investigations,
24 under cooperative agreements with such agencies.

1 “(c) PENALTIES.—Any person who violates any of
2 paragraphs (1) through (5) of subsection (a) shall be fined
3 under this title, imprisoned for not more than 7 years,
4 or both, for each such violation. Each instance of a viola-
5 tion of any such paragraph shall be considered a single
6 violation.

7 “(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

8 “(1) COMMERCIAL GREYHOUND RACING.—The
9 term ‘commercial greyhound racing’ means any
10 event in which betting or wagering on the speed or
11 ability of greyhounds occurs.

12 “(2) SIMULCAST.—The term ‘simulcast’ means
13 remote gambling on foreign or domestic greyhound
14 races taking place elsewhere.”.

15 (b) DEFINITION OF ANIMAL.—Section 2(g) of the
16 Animal Welfare Act (7 U.S.C. 2132(g)) is amended by in-
17 serting “hare,” after “rabbit,”.

18 **SEC. 4. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**

19 Nothing in this Act, or the amendments made by this
20 Act, shall be construed—

21 (1) to preempt any State law prohibiting gam-
22 bling or protecting the welfare of animals including
23 but not limited to greyhounds, jackrabbits, and
24 hares; or

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

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