



WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE  
STATE CAPITOL  
CHARLESTON, WEST VIRGINIA 25305

June 22, 2026

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito  
United States Senate  
172 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jim Justice  
United States Senate  
G12 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Capito and Senator Justice:

As members of the West Virginia Legislature, we write to ask for your support of the Greyhound Protection Act and to urge its inclusion in the upcoming Farm Bill reauthorization. Federal action on this issue would help West Virginia follow the path that all other states have already taken, and most importantly, it will free up significant state tax revenues for unmet needs in our state.

West Virginia is now the only state in the country with operating commercial greyhound tracks. Wheeling Island and Mardi Gras together account for the entirety of the U.S. live greyhound racing industry. Forty-four states prohibit the practice outright, and every other state that once permitted it has either banned it by referendum or phased it out as economically unsustainable. Live racing continues here only because state law requires our casinos to host it and because the Greyhound Breeding Development Fund channels tens of millions of dollars in casino tax revenue into purses and breeding subsidies each year.

Independent analyses like the one recently released by Ball State University<sup>1</sup> and another conducted by Spectrum Gaming Group<sup>2</sup>, have repeatedly concluded that greyhound racing provides no net fiscal benefit to the state of West Virginia. The trend has only worsened: subsidy outlays remain in the eight figures annually even as live wagering at the tracks continues its long and steady decline. Every dollar that is diverted to greyhound purses is a dollar that does not flow

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<sup>1</sup> Michael J. Hicks & Dagny Faulk, Ctr. for Bus. & Econ. Rsch., Ball State Univ., *The Economic Effects of Greyhound Racing in West Virginia* (Feb. 25, 2026), <https://projects.cberdata.org/reports/Greyhound-WV-2026-0223.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Spectrum Gaming Grp., *Impact Study: West Virginia Greyhound-Racing Subsidies* (Jan. 9, 2015), <https://spectrumgamin.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/spectrumgreyhoundssubsidyreportforstateofwv1-9-15.pdf>.

to the state's general revenue fund, lowering our citizens' tax burden, paving state roads, or ensuring that local schools stay open.

This arrangement is fundamentally inconsistent with the conservative principles we all share. State law compels private casino operators to host a line of business that loses money and then directs public revenue to subsidize that same line of business because the market on its own will no longer support it. Free enterprise does not require — and conservative governance does not condone — statutes that force private companies to run unprofitable operations, or transfer payments that keep a failed industry alive at taxpayer expense. The West Virginia greyhound program is, in plain terms, a government mandate paired with corporate welfare, and it has produced exactly the result one would predict: an industry that has collapsed everywhere it was allowed to compete on its own merits, kept on life support here only by force of law and support of subsidy.

Beyond the fiscal and philosophical cost, the welfare record is indefensible. State Racing Commission injury reports document hundreds of injuries at West Virginia tracks every year, including catastrophic fractures and on-track deaths. In 2024 alone, 489 greyhounds were injured, including 162 who broke bones and 13 dogs that died. All so West Virginians can prop up an industry that can not exist in the free market?

The Greyhound Protection Act would prohibit the use of interstate commerce to support greyhound racing — including the interstate transport of dogs for racing purposes and interstate simulcast wagering on greyhound races. For West Virginia specifically, that federal floor matters. As long as our two remaining tracks can rely on out-of-state breeding pipelines and out-of-state simulcast revenue, the industry has every incentive to resist state-level reform. Closing those federal channels would remove the props that hold the industry up here and would give those of us working in Charleston the room we need to retire the program responsibly, with appropriate transitional support for the dogs, the workers, and the host communities.

Including the Greyhound Protection Act in the Farm Bill is the cleanest legislative path. Your support would not be a vote against West Virginia. It would be a vote to free West Virginia from the last vestige of a cruel and uneconomic practice, and to give our state the same fresh start that forty-nine others already enjoy.

We respectfully ask that you work with the leadership of the Senate Agriculture Committee to protect the Greyhound Protection Act included in the House version of the Farm Bill. We would welcome the opportunity to brief your staffs in greater detail and to coordinate with your offices on companion reform efforts here at home.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued service to the people of West Virginia.

Respectfully,

Senator Mike Azinger  
Delegate Jarred Cannon  
Senator Anne Charnock  
Senator Vince Deeds

Senator Patrick Martin  
Delegate Jonathan Pinson  
Delegate Matt Rohrbach  
Senator Chris Rose

cc: Chair and Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry