

GREY2K USA WORLDWIDE



15 September 2023

Testimony in Support of Customs Legislation Amendment, Bill 2021: Commercial Greyhound Export and Import Prohibition, Senator Mehreen Faruqi

It is time to prohibit the commercial export and import of greyhounds for racing, just as we are working to do in the United States.

GREY2K USA Worldwide is the largest greyhound protection organization in the world and works to pass laws to protect greyhounds and sponsor the rescue and adoption of greyhounds worldwide. **We support the goals of Bill 2021 entirely.** It is an important first step so that Australia can join a worldwide trend against dog racing.

Even more, we urge the Senate to consider certain additional provisions including a **phase-out of commercial greyhound racing in all states, outlawing all forms of betting and wagering on domestic and foreign races, and an immediate ban on live baiting.** These should be enacted along with whole-of-life tracking for all greyhounds by an independent office of animal protection. **Our recent survey commissioned with the Committee for the Protection of Greyhounds shows that the citizens of Australia will support these positive changes. It has been included with my testimony today.**

Countries must work together to combat this cruel industry. The US Greyhound Protection Act, which I have authored, looks to not only outlaw dog racing and live lure training nationwide but is also designed to prohibit the export of dogs for racing elsewhere.

In my written testimony, I have provided evidence about the global decline and outright rejection of the Depression Era dog racing industry, which I must admit was an American invention. Some 100 years ago, it could not be foreseen that hundreds of thousands of greyhounds would suffer and die. But today, **the systemic cruelty and disregard for the well-being of racing dogs** and the animal suffering it causes has worked to discredit the entire industry in the eyes of the general public. Our American bill has over 100 bi-partisan sponsors to date.

Further, the business model of commercial dog racing is not one of an independent enterprise that serves the community. Rather it is an **old fashioned form of gambling that depends on taxpayer subsidies while causing great harm to dogs, to the pleasure and enrichment of just a few.** This has been extensively documented across Australia and in all foreign countries that have ever hosted operating racetracks.

Rather than recite the information I have already submitted, today I'd like to tell you a personal story.

For many years, Australian breeders shipped their unwanted dogs to race and die in Macau, a Special Administrative Region of China. One of those rejects was my own dog, Brooklyn.

He was small white and fawn dog with brown spots like a Guernsey cow. He was born on December 10, 2008 and on that day, a red fawn greyhound named Miss Clementine had a litter of eleven puppies on a farm in New South Wales. Only one of his brothers, Desperate Dan, ever made any real profit. Another brother, Earlwood Wonder, won a paltry sum of \$50 in prize money. The rest of his littermates disappeared from official record altogether, while one was listed – but never given a name.

Brooklyn was sent to race and performed a total of seven times at three tracks. As an adult dog, he was strong, with a broad frame and large expressive eyes. But like his mother, Brooklyn was a poor racer. He never finished above fifth place and earned a career total of \$140. By September 2010, at the age of twenty-one months, his career was over.

Cast aside, Brooklyn's "owner" decided to make one final score on the young greyhound. He sold him off to race at the worst dog track in the world, the Canidrome. It was a bleak place and there was no adoption program. No greyhound ever got out alive because once a dog slowed down or aged out, just like clockwork, he was killed and replaced. **Hundreds of unwanted Australian greyhounds were routinely shipped to the Canidrome to race, then die, each year, at a rate of 30 per month. Their fates were sealed. And every breeder or owner who sent their dogs there knew it.**

Upon his arrival, Brooklyn was placed in a small, dark, and barren concrete cell in what looked like a prison compound. He was a prisoner who had committed no crime. It would take nearly ten years, an international campaign involving a candlelight vigil in ten countries, the signatures of over 300,000 people across the globe, and strategic lobbying efforts led by our board member Albano Martins of ANIMA Macau to finally #CloseTheCanidrome. **Working with our partner Pet Levrieri of Italy and hundreds of adoption groups in the USA, the UK and Europe, we airlifted the 532 surviving dogs to safety beginning in 2018.**



All this was necessary because someone wanted to make money gambling on innocent dogs. Thankfully, Brooklyn came home to my family and enjoyed three happy years before succumbing to a stroke and then cancer. His treatment and care cost well over \$10,000 and it was worth every dime. But it should never have been necessary. Brooklyn, like tens of thousands of other Australian greyhounds, should never have been shipped to the Canidrome in the first place. In short, **this is an outdated industry that cares more for the buck than the bark.**

Brooklyn's story is one that will keep repeating unless the important legislation before you is approved. To this day, Greyhound Australasia's passport system remains unenforceable. **The only solution to this dilemma, and the only way to protect greyhounds from harm is for the federal government to enact a statutory ban as prescribed by Senator Faruqi's wise legislation.** I hope you will approve this measure.

Thank you for your time today.

Christine A. Dorchak, Esq.
President and General Counsel
GREY2K USA Worldwide