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2ND DISTRICT

ALLEN, BOURBON, CRAWFORD AND NEOSHO COUNTIES

Testimony in Support of House Bill 2173

February 7, 2017

Chairman Barker and members of the House Federal and State Affairs Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on a topic that is very near to me. In fact, Camptown Greyhound Park in Frontenac is basically across the street from my home place. You have heard much testimony about the economic impacts to the state. The number of jobs created both in the industry and the restoration of the facilities. You have the numbers in front of you. We can all dispute the actual dollars and cents, but what we can't dispute is the current situation. Other than a small portion of property tax paid, local and state government gets zero. We in the Legislature have an opportunity to change that. All we need to do is tweak the percentages, and these tracks will be up and running again. Today you have heard about tax parity and the fact that we are not expanding gaming. Current laws allow these facilities to operate, however, for any business to be open, it has to be profitable. These changes will allow that. This is a private investment, not state owned. There is a non-profit element which in my area is a big deal.

As you know, I represent Southeast Kansas. I have lived there my whole life. I am a member of just about every group we have. I know what 650 new jobs will mean to Crawford County. Currently the county receives \$17,314.80 in property taxes. When operational, the county will receive \$1.4 million in property taxes just from the track. That is not to mention the additional tax money that will be received from the people who will work there. That is huge for our school district, our city and our county. It is not just our community, it is all the communities at home. Our biggest employers are the Hospital and Pittsburg State University. These will be real private sector jobs, good paying jobs that we need. I could talk for five hours on how important this is to my region!

In closing, I just want to remind you this is not expanding gaming. These places currently exist. It simply levels the playing field. It is all Mr. Ruffin's money, no state funds. It is money to this huge deficit that we can use to teach kids and pave roads. As Jethro said, naught from naught is naught. We currently get nothing. These adjustments will ensure that we get something. We need it. I will stand for questions.