

As Bird Flu Wreaks Havoc, U.S. Senators Kennedy and Booker Intro FIGHT Act to Crack Down on Animal Fighting, Trafficking

Bipartisan legislation attracts nearly 800 endorsers, including Animal Wellness Action, the National Sheriffs' Association, and the United Egg Producers

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, April 10, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Driven by concerns over threats posed to commercial poultry production by illegal transports of fighting roosters, along with the barbarism and the comingled crimes associated with staged animal fighting, U.S. Senators John Kennedy, R-La., and Cory Booker, D-N.J., introduced legislation to strengthen the federal law against dogfighting and cockfighting.



The bloodsport of cockfighting is a major reason Congress needs to pass the FIGHT Act.

Their bipartisan, bicameral legislation is entitled the Fighting Inhumane Gambling and High-Risk Trafficking (FIGHT) Act, and it has nearly 800 endorsing organizations.

“For bloodlust and illegal gambling, dogfighters and cockfighters place animals in pits and goad them to injure, mutilate, and kill,” said Wayne Pacelle, president of [Animal Wellness Action](#) and the [Center for a Humane Economy](#). “The FIGHT Act will provide more tools to law enforcement to root out this savagery and prevent the spillover of viruses and violence in our communities.”

The FIGHT Act would amend Section 26 of the Animal Welfare Act to strengthen and enhance enforcement against animal fighting. This bill would:

- Ban on-line gambling on animal fights in the U.S., no matter where the broadcast signals for dogfights and cockfights originate.
- Halt shipments of mature roosters (chickens only) shipped through U.S. mail. This legislation does not address shipments of baby chicks, which are used in accepted agricultural operations. Shipping dogs through the mail is already illegal.
- Creates a citizen suit provision allowing private right of action against illegal animal fighters



The FIGHT Act will provide more tools to law enforcement to root out this savagery and prevent the spillover of viruses and violence in our communities.”

*Wayne Pacelle, president,
Animal Wellness Action*

and ease the resource burden on federal agencies.

- Enhances forfeiture provisions to include real property used in the commission of an animal fighting crime.

“Those engaging in dog and cock fights are abusive, organized and dangerous—and their heinous behavior must be held accountable to the fullest extent of the law. It’s illegal to abuse God’s creatures for sport, and this bill would give law enforcement crucial tools to end this cruel practice,” said Kennedy, who has a long track record of fighting for animal welfare.

“Animal fighting is cruel, illegal, and unacceptable,” said Senator Booker, who succeeded in 2018 in extending prohibitions on dogfighting and cockfighting to the U.S. territories. “It’s time we take stronger action to stop these heinous abuses against animals and protect them from being exploited for entertainment and profit. This bill will tighten enforcement to put a stop to illegal animal fighting.”

The amendments to the federal anti-animal-fighting law also will help protect public health and slow infections of commercial poultry flocks. Virulent Newcastle disease has entered the United States through the illegal smuggling of infected cockfighting roosters from Mexico at least 10 times, causing more than a billion dollars in losses and depopulation of millions of birds, mainly used in commercial production.

“If cockfighting birds are infected, they have the potential to expand the geography and duration of viral outbreaks throughout the U.S. and the world,” said Dr. Jim Keen, D.V.M., Ph.D., director of veterinary programs for the Center for a Humane Economy and a former 20-year infectious disease specialist with the USDA.”

The FIGHT Act also would address the growing international broadcasting and wagering on animal fighting, in an era where on-line gambling has exploded. Online gambling in the Philippines generates more than \$10 billion a year in wagers.

Animal Wellness Action, the Center for a Humane Economy, and Showing Animals Respect and Kindness (SHARK) have conducted comprehensive investigations of cockfighting in Alabama, California, Guam, Kentucky, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Puerto Rico, Tennessee, and other states and territories. The organizations worked to disrupt eight cockfighting operations in the last six weeks, including five cockfighting derbies in Texas. While cockfighters stage illegal animal combat throughout the U.S. – at dozens of arenas in Puerto Rico and at facilities from Alabama to California to Kentucky to Oklahoma – America is also the cockfighting breeding supplier to the world, with countless fighting animals sent to Mexico, the Philippines, and other nations.

Animal Wellness Action has documented, using live-animal shipping records from the Guam Department of Agriculture (GDA) over a recent five-year period, that 12,000 fighting birds entering the island via U.S. Postal Service shipments. “The U.S. Postal Inspection Service has not conducted a single successful interdiction of fighting birds even though cockfighters are illegally moving tens of thousands of fighting birds through the U.S. mail,” added Pacelle.

“Animal fighting is an epidemic in this nation, and I know it because SHARK is finding animal fighting pits all across the nation and exposing them” added Steve Hindi, founder of SHARK. “We must have more help from the federal government to shut down these criminal operations.”

The full bill text of the FIGHT Act [is available here](#).

Animal Wellness Action is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(4) whose mission is to help animals by promoting laws and regulations at federal, state and local levels that forbid cruelty to all animals. The group also works to enforce existing anti-cruelty and wildlife protection laws. Animal Wellness Action believes helping animals helps us all. Twitter: @AWAction_News

The Center for a Humane Economy is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(3) whose mission is to help animals by helping forge a more humane economic order. The first organization of its kind in the animal protection movement, the Center encourages businesses to honor their social responsibilities in a culture where consumers, investors, and other key stakeholders abhor cruelty and the degradation of the environment and embrace innovation as a means of eliminating both. The Center believes helping animals helps us all. Twitter: @TheHumaneCenter

Wayne Pacelle
Animal Wellness Action
+ +1 202-420-0446
[email us here](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/802145850>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2025 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.