

Gottheimer, Malliotakis Introduce Bipartisan FBI Animal Cruelty Taskforce Act to Crack Down on Malicious Animal Abuse

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, June 3, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Animal Wellness Action](#) applauds today's introduction of the bipartisan FBI Animal Cruelty Taskforce (FBI ACT) Act, led by U.S. Representatives Josh Gottheimer, D-N.J., and Nicole Malliotakis, R-N.Y. – a landmark measure to strengthen federal enforcement against animal cruelty. This critical legislation creates a specialized unit within the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) dedicated to investigating and building cases targeting severe acts of animal abuse—including dogfighting, cockfighting, the production and sale of animal crush videos.

The FBI ACT complements the previously introduced Animal Cruelty Enforcement (ACE) Act, H.R. 1477, led by Reps. David Joyce, R-Ohio, and Joe Neguse, D-Colo. The bill establishes a team of animal cruelty prosecutors within the U.S. Department of Justice. Together, these bipartisan bills form a powerful one-two punch: one focused on investigation and policing, the other on prosecution.

"When we crack down on animal cruelty, we make our communities safer because malicious acts of violence against animals are invariably tangled up with other criminal conduct, such as narcotics trafficking, domestic violence, human trafficking, and illegal firearms," said Wayne Pacelle, president of Animal Wellness Action. "Reps. Gottheimer and Malliotakis are leading an urgently needed legislative campaign that every lawmaker and every American citizen should swing behind regardless of political affiliation."

"Animals are cherished companions in our homes, valuable partners for people with disabilities, and essential to our farms and our economy," said Congressman Josh Gottheimer, a long-time leader of animal welfare issues in the U.S. House of Representatives. "Our new bipartisan legislation will give law enforcement the tools they need to crack down on animal cruelty and hold abusers accountable. We must continue to work together to stop animal cruelty and ensure all animals are treated with the care and dignity they deserve."

"Our bipartisan legislation will establish a dedicated task force within the FBI to go after those who violate our federal animal cruelty laws, including cases of dogfighting and cockfighting," said Congresswoman Nicole Malliotakis, a co-chair of the Congressional Animal Protection Caucus. "We must continue to support efforts to protect innocent animals from these inhumane and illegal acts."

The FBI ACT Act marks a significant step forward in building federal law enforcement capacity to root out organized networks of animal cruelty. By embedding enforcement agents within the FBI, the legislation ensures that serious violations of federal anti-cruelty laws receive the investigative and policing attention they demand.

Animal Wellness Action urges swift passage of the FBI ACT Act and calls on Congress to pair it with the ACE Act to fully modernize the federal government's response to violent crimes against animals.

In March, in response to the FBI seizing 190 dogs in a fighting network run by former NFL running back LeShon Johnson, FBI Director Kash Patel excoriated acts of animal cruelty and noted the FBI's commitment to attacking the problem. "The FBI will not tolerate criminals that harm innocent animals for their twisted form of entertainment," said Patel. "The FBI views animal cruelty investigations as a precursor to larger, organized crime efforts, similar to trafficking and homicides. This is yet another push in the FBI's crackdown of violent offenders harming our most innocent."

This week, Reps. Don Bacon, R-Neb., Andrea Salinas, D-Ore., Anna Paulina Luna, R-Fla., and Don Davis, D-N.C., with Reps. Gottheimer and Malliotakis, will reintroduce the FIGHT Act to ban the shipment of fighting roosters through the U.S. Postal Service and create a private right of action to allow citizens to win injunctions against ongoing dogfighting and cockfighting operations. Senators John Kennedy, R-La., and Cory Booker, D-N.J., lead the Senate FIGHT Act.

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