



Sheriffs' Association of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

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September 26, 2023

The Honorable Glenn Thompson
Agricultural Committee Chairman
400 Cannon House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Thompson:

On behalf of the Pennsylvania Sheriffs' Association, I respectfully ask for your cosponsorship or other forms of active support for H.R. 2742, the FIGHT Act, to crack down on the inhumane, illegal practices of cockfighting and dogfighting. In our efforts to serve the Pennsylvania community – both human and animal – we want to stamp out this form of organized crime and malicious animal cruelty.

The Pennsylvania Sheriffs' Association is glad to join a diverse set of endorsers of this legislation, including the Small and Rural Law Enforcement Executives Association, United Egg Producers, and the American Gaming Association. This legislation addresses gambling through the internet and webcasting on dogfights and cockfights, the use of U.S. Postal Services for illegal shipping of fighting animals, and enables civil actions against known organized animal fighting operators.

My office recognizes that animal fighting is banned in all states, yet it is still quite widespread. In fact, Pennsylvania rescues and law enforcement agencies are burdened with dogfighting cases all too often in the Commonwealth, as [this recent news report](#) details. There are significant issues with the disposition of seized fighting animals. The federal government and nonprofit animal welfare groups can play an essential supplemental role in helping us enforce the laws to halt inhumane animal fights.

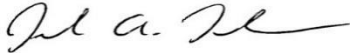
Further, the federal government plays a critical role in complementing the work of local law enforcement to interdict animal fighting operations. These are often complex operations, requiring multiple agencies stretching across states, territories, and even nations. We have finite resources and may be unable to conduct a complete investigation if an animal fighting ring stretches across county or state lines.

It is essential for policymakers to understand that animal fighting is always bound up with other crimes. Illegal gambling is always present, but money laundering, narcotics possession, and other criminal conduct are also often present. There have been many outbursts of violence at animal

fighters, and when animal fighting rings are broken up, our communities become safer and more livable.

A significant part of law enforcement work involves deterrence. Strengthening federal law and intimidating criminals, reminding them that the costs of their conduct will threaten their freedom, may drive some of these people out of business. Animal cruelty crimes are bound up with other dangerous social behaviors. Please consider cosponsoring the FIGHT Act to deter these crimes and to help us unravel this form of organized crime.

Sincerely,



Sheriff John Zechman
Snyder County
President

About PSA - The Pennsylvania Sheriffs' Association (PSA) represents the 67 county Sheriffs in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, with the support of the almost 2,300 Deputies and a general membership of more than 16,000. The PSA is a non-profit organization as defined under 501(c)(6). The PSA is dedicated to promoting a better knowledge of the rights and duties of Sheriffs, promoting cooperation and efficiency for all Sheriffs, along with raising the level of professionalism among sheriffs and their deputies.

Since 1923, the PSA has served as an information clearinghouse for the Office of Sheriff.

