

INDIANA SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION, INC.

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(Indiana Only)

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STEPHEN P. LUCE
Executive Director

Dear Esteemed Members of Congress,

On behalf of the Indiana Sheriffs' Association, I respectfully request you cosponsor H.R. 2742, the Fighting Inhumane Gambling and High-Risk Trafficking (FIGHT) Act, to crack down on the inhumane, illegal practices of cockfighting and dogfighting in our state and throughout the nation. We have had repeated dogfighting and cockfighting cases in our state; without exception, they involve animal cruelty and other criminal conduct, making our communities less safe for everyone.

This legislation addresses gambling through the internet and webcasting on dogfights and cockfights and the use of U.S. Postal Services for illegal shipping of fighting animals. It also enables civil actions against known organized animal fighting operators.

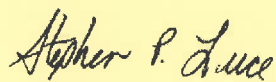
Just in August, a dogfighting ring that had been operating since 2001 was raided, where 75 dogs were recovered. There are significant issues with the disposition of seized fighting animals, and enormous costs to state authorities. In so many cases like this, our sheriffs work in cooperation with federal authorities to investigate these crimes, make arrests, and deal with the disposition of seized animals.

Criminal networks of dogfighters and cockfighting often require complex, multi-agency, multi-state investigations. Our county sheriffs have finite resources, and it is a help to us to be able to work with federal investigators and the Indiana State Gaming Commission to crack these organized crime rings.

It is essential for policymakers to understand that animal fighting is 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 fights, and when animal fighting rings are broken up, our communities become safer and more livable.

Strengthening federal law reminds lawbreakers of the risks and costs of their conduct and may cause them to rethink the idea of violating the law. Please consider cosponsoring the FIGHT Act to deter these crimes and to help us unravel this form of organized crime.

Sincerely,



Stephen P. Luce
Executive Director