



MINNESOTA SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

100 Empire Drive, Suite 222, St. Paul, MN 55103
Phone: 651.451.7216 Fax: 651.451.8087
Email: info@mnsheriffs.org

April 10, 2023

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

*Re: Minnesota Sheriffs support of **FIGHT Act**, S. 1529/H.R. 2742*

Dear Senator Klobuchar:

I am reaching out on behalf of the Minnesota Sheriffs' Association, and the elected sheriffs of the 87 counties in our state. I write to alert you to our endorsement of the **FIGHT Act**, S. 1529/H.R. 2742, and to request that you co-sponsor this important, bipartisan measure. The bill has been assigned to the Committee on Agriculture.

We have seen distressing animal fighting cases in our state, and we look forward to collaborating with our federal partners to interdict these criminal networks when they are uncovered. The **FIGHT Act** will enable a step-up in enforcement activity by building in more enforcement tools into the national animal-fighting law.

Animal fighting is a form of organized crime, and it is bound up with other criminal activities, such as illegal gambling, firearms possession, money laundering, and narcotics trafficking. It also threatens our major agriculture industry, particularly egg, broiler bird, and turkey industries. These production agriculture sectors are major enterprises in our state, and diseases such as bird flu and virulent Newcastle disease threaten our multi-billion-dollar industries. Cockfighting has been known to spread these diseases, and our state has a strong interest in not seeing mass depopulation of birds used in agriculture.

This legislation addresses gambling through the internet and webcasting on dogfights and cockfights, halts shipping adult chicken roosters through the U.S. Postal Service, enhances criminal forfeiture provisions, and enables civil actions against known organized animal fighting operators.

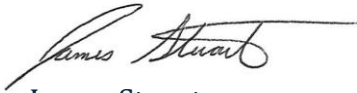
The disposition of seized fighting animals presents significant issues. The federal government and nonprofit animal welfare groups can play an essential supplemental role in helping us enforce the laws to halt inhumane animal fights.

Animal fighting cases are often complex operations, requiring multiple agencies stretching across states, territories, and even nations. While animal fighting is a felony in our state, we consider the federal law a strong supplement to our state-based statutes against dogfighting and cockfighting in Minnesota.

One aspect of good lawmaking is deterring criminals from engaging in illegal enterprise in the first place. By passing the FIGHT Act, we signal to dogfighters and cockfighters that they risk their freedom and assets if they persist in breaking our state and federal laws.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we trust in your support for our shared objectives. I hope you will support our law enforcement community by co-sponsoring the FIGHT Act.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "James Stuart".

James Stuart
Executive Director