



# ARIZONA SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

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DAVID RHODES, YAVAPAI COUNTY SHERIFF, PRESIDENT  
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THE ARIZONA SHERIFFS ASSOCIATION IS THE ONE UNITED CREDIBLE VOICE REPRESENTING LAW ENFORCEMENT AND PUBLIC SAFETY FOR THE COUNTIES OF ARIZONA

September 6, 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of the Arizona Sheriff's Association, I am writing to express our support for the [FIGHT Act, H.R. 2742/S.1529](#), and to urge you to cosponsor this anti-cruelty legislation and advocate for its enactment in the 118th Congress. As sheriffs committed to the safety of all Arizonans, we are acutely aware of the range of problems that animal fighting crimes spawn in our communities.

Arizona voters voted to outlaw cockfighting in a landslide in 1998, paralleling the existing felony-level prohibitions on dog fighting. County sheriffs do a great job cracking down on animal fighting, but these are often interstate and international crimes, and it's valuable for us to cooperate with federal authorities on major cases, including border cases.

The United States has sound laws against animal fighting (7 U.S.C. § 2132). However, the problems are so severe that Congress should pass the FIGHT Act to strengthen enforcement capacity.

Animal fighting is not a minor or isolated issue for law enforcement; it is a form of organized crime intricately linked with other serious offenses, including illegal gambling, weapons possession, money laundering, and drug trafficking. These activities undermine the well-being of our communities, and they are vices we neither want nor need in Arizona.

The FIGHT Act will empower federal law enforcement to take additional actions against illegal animal fighters. Many organized crime syndicates involved in animal fighting include individuals with extensive criminal histories, and their networks often span county, state, and even national boundaries.

Arizona has a significant agricultural sector, including a major egg industry. We are pleased to join Hickman's Family Farms, based in Buckeye, in endorsing this legislation. We are all concerned about past instances of smuggled fighting birds from Mexico, which have led to the spread of disease. Currently, we are on high alert for the spread of H5N1, commonly known as bird flu. Zoonotic diseases pose substantial public health risks and could have devastating economic consequences for farmers and related businesses.

The handling of seized fighting animals has historically been a barrier to enforcement, as some operations involve hundreds of animals needing placement. The federal government, in partnership with nonprofit animal welfare organizations, can play a crucial role in humanely placing seized animals and removing them from violent, life-threatening situations.

Arizona is a strong leader in law and order, and your co-sponsorship of the FIGHT Act will significantly bolster our collective efforts to eradicate brutal animal cruelty and associated crimes. Together, we can protect our communities from cluster crimes, uphold the rule of law, halt malicious cruelty to animals, and safeguard our state's agricultural industry.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. We look forward to your favorable response to our request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Rhodes".

David Rhodes  
President  
Yavapai County Sheriff