



MARYLAND SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION, INC.



The Honorable Angela Alsobrooks
United States Senate

Dear Esteemed Member of the Maryland Senate Delegation,

On behalf of the Maryland Sheriffs' Association, I write to express our strong support for the FIGHT Act (Fighting Inhumane Gambling and High-Risk Animal Trafficking Act, H.R. 3946 / S. 1454). This bipartisan legislation—introduced by Senators John Kennedy and Cory Booker in the Senate and Representatives Don Bacon and Andrea Salinas in the House—would provide critical federal enforcement tools to dismantle organized dogfighting and cockfighting operations.

Why the FIGHT Act is essential for Maryland communities:

- **Institutional betrayal and extreme cruelty:** A recent federal case revealed that Frederick Moorefield, a Maryland resident and senior Department of Defense official, ran a dogfighting ring out of his home for a decade. He brutally killed dogs that lost fights by electrocution and other means. This shocking case illustrates how entrenched and brutal these crimes can be, even among individuals in positions of trust and authority.
- **Tangible public safety threats:** Dogfighting rings are rarely isolated. They are often linked to broader criminal activity, including illegal gambling, weapons trafficking, racketeering, and intimidation. These operations endanger public safety and corrode community well-being.
- **Critical gaps in enforcement:** The FIGHT Act would close longstanding loopholes by banning simulcasting and gambling on animal fighting events, prohibiting the shipment of mature roosters through the mail, authorizing forfeiture of property used in these crimes, and creating a private right of action to hold offenders accountable.
- **Maryland leadership:** Earlier this year, Maryland became the first state in the nation to adopt restrictions on the number of roosters a property owner can retain, complementing federal law and addressing one of the key drivers of cockfighting. This measure passed unanimously in the General Assembly, underscoring the bipartisan commitment to curbing animal fighting. This legislation is endorsed by the National Sheriffs' Association and the National District Attorneys Association, both of which recognize its importance to law enforcement. It has also earned the backing of over 900 organizations across the country, including the United Egg Producers and the American Gaming Association, demonstrating rare alignment across sectors such as agriculture, gaming, law enforcement, animal welfare, and environmental protection.

Maryland communities deserve robust tools to protect both vulnerable animals and the public from the violence and criminality associated with organized animal fighting. We urge you to cosponsor and actively support the FIGHT Act and help advance it toward swift passage.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to justice and safety in Maryland.

Darren M. Popkin

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Executive Director
Maryland Sheriffs' Association