



VERMONT SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

PO BOX 4466 Bennington, VT 05201-4466

April 9, 2026

Dear Representative Balint,

On behalf of the Vermont Sheriffs' Association, we write to urge your support for three closely related policy reforms at the federal level to address extreme forms of animal cruelty and the other closely intertwined forms of criminal conduct: the Fighting Inhumane Gambling and High-Risk Trafficking (FIGHT) Act (H.R. 3946), the Animal Cruelty Enforcement (ACE) Act (H.R. 1477/S. 1454), and the No Flight, No Fight Act (H.R. 7371).

Animal fighting is a despicable crime and we need strong federal and state laws to dismantle these operations. They are frequently tied to illegal gambling, narcotics trafficking, weapons offenses, money laundering, and other violent crimes. Law enforcement officers are often the first to encounter these operations, and we need stronger federal tools to investigate and dismantle them.

The FIGHT Act would strengthen enforcement by banning gambling and simulcasting on animal fights, prohibiting the shipment of mature roosters through the U.S. mail, expanding forfeiture authority for properties used in animal fighting crimes, and allowing citizens to bring civil actions against violators.

The ACE Act would establish a dedicated Animal Cruelty Crimes Section within the Department of Justice to improve coordination between federal agencies and ensure that animal cruelty crimes are investigated and prosecuted effectively.

The No Flight, No Fight Act would prohibit airlines from transporting mature roosters for fighting purposes, closing another loophole used by criminal cockfighting networks while preserving legitimate agricultural uses.

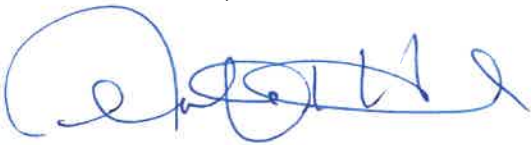
These bills are especially important because animal fighting remains a persistent problem across the country despite being illegal in all 50 states. For example, Vermont's own VINE Sanctuary in Springfield takes in roosters from fighting operations, as too often they are euthanized because of limited resources in the animal rescue community and the mistaken belief that they cannot be rehabilitated. Their work is a powerful reminder that these animals are victims of organized criminal activity, not disposable property.

Taken together, these bills would help law enforcement address the full scope of animal fighting operations by targeting the gambling, trafficking, transport, and organized criminal elements that allow these enterprises to continue.

We respectfully urge you to cosponsor H.R. 3946, H.R. 1477, and H.R. 7371. These bills would provide law enforcement with additional tools to combat organized crime, protect communities, and prevent needless cruelty.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued service to Vermont.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Harlow", with a large, stylized initial "J" and "H".

Sheriff Jennifer Harlow

President of the Vermont Sheriff's Association