

PRESIDENT

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Twentieth Circuit
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Dear Members of the Florida Congressional Delegation:

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Tenth Circuit

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Fifth Circuit

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On behalf of the Florida Prosecuting Attorneys Association, representing Florida's 20 elected State Attorneys and over 2,000 Assistant State Attorneys, we write to respectfully ask for your support for three bipartisan federal measures that would strengthen the ability of law enforcement and prosecutors to combat animal fighting and other serious violations of federal animal cruelty laws: the Fighting Inhumane Gambling and High-risk Trafficking (FIGHT) Act (H.R. 3946/S. 1454), the Animal Cruelty Enforcement (ACE) Act (H.R. 1477), and the No Flight, No Fight Act (H.R. 7371).

Our interest in these measures is grounded on stopping animal cruelty and providing proportional punishment for individuals who commit malicious acts of animal cruelty. Congress has enacted strong federal prohibitions against animal fighting and other forms of animal cruelty because lawmakers understand the correlation between animal cruelty and human violence. Still, criminal statutes are only as effective as the investigative resources, enforcement mechanisms, and penalties available to those charged with enforcing them.

Animal fighting ventures typically involve illegal gambling, interstate trafficking, substantial movement of cash, and networks of participants operating across jurisdictional boundaries. Those characteristics make effective cooperation among local, state, and federal authorities particularly important.

Florida has seen firsthand that these crimes remain a problem, with busts from Miami-Dade County to the panhandle. Individuals with significant ties to Ocala's horse-racing community were recently accused of participating in cockfighting in Puerto Rico. Dogfighting and cockfighting are especially disturbing in Florida because of their prevalence.

The three measures before Congress address different components of the enforcement challenge.

- 1) The FIGHT Act would strengthen federal animal-fighting law by providing additional tools to address the individuals and infrastructure that sustain these criminal ventures. We are grateful that both Senators Scott and Moody, and a large number of U.S. House members are cosponsors of this legislation.
- 2) The ACE Act would establish a dedicated Animal Cruelty Crimes Section within the U.S. Department of Justice and direct it to coordinate with other federal agencies. Creating institutional expertise within DOJ would provide federal prosecutors and their state and local partners with a more consistent enforcement counterpart.

- 3) Finally, the No Flight, No Fight Act addresses the transportation pipeline that allows fighting birds to move through commercial aviation networks. Criminal enterprises increasingly operate across state and international boundaries, and federal law should prevent legitimate transportation infrastructure from being exploited to facilitate illegal animal fighting.

We hope our senators consider carrying the banner on all three issues, including by introducing the ACE Act and the No Flight, No Fight Act in their chamber.

More than 40 state sheriff and prosecutorial associations across the country have endorsed one or more of these measures. That breadth of support reflects the practical experience of officials who investigate, charge, and prosecute crimes in communities across America.

We therefore respectfully ask every member of Florida's congressional delegation to support these policies through every viable legislative avenue.

We encourage members to cosponsor and support passage of the FIGHT Act, ACE Act, and No Flight, No Fight Act as standalone legislation. We also urge the delegation to support Farm Bill amendments or other legislative vehicles incorporating the substantive provisions of these bills. The objective should not depend upon which parliamentary route ultimately succeeds; what matters is ensuring that these enforcement improvements become law.

State and local prosecutors will continue doing our part to enforce Florida law. But interstate and international criminal activity necessarily requires a strong federal partner. These measures would give federal authorities better tools, greater institutional capacity, and clearer mechanisms to complement the work already being done by prosecutors and law enforcement agencies in Florida and throughout the country.

We appreciate your consideration and respectfully urge your support.

Respectfully submitted,



Amira D. Fox
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State Attorney, 20th Judicial Circuit