



AB 928 – The Cockfighting Cruelty Act

Updated: April 4, 2025

Bill Summary

AB 928 allows law enforcement to proactively address cockfighting before it becomes a major criminal operation by establishing civil liability for those who traffic birds for fighting. Specifically, the bill prescribes that anyone who maintains more than 3 roosters per acre or 25 total on a parcel of property and confines their movement through the use of a tether or an enclosure for long term housing is liable for a \$2,500 fine for each bird more than the allowed limit. This measure exempts commercial poultry operations, poultry hobbyists, schools, animal agencies, and FFA and 4H projects. It also excludes bantam chickens which are not used as fighting birds.

Background

Cockfighting is a barbaric and inexcusable criminal industry that profits from violent cruelty to animals. It involves pitting two animals with metal weapons attached to their legs to fight to the death for the purpose of profit, gambling, and entertainment.

Cockfighting pits two roosters against each other while spectators gamble on their fate. Although the activity is illegal in every state and under federal law, it continues to be a wide spread criminal industry in the U.S. By far, the most profitable aspect of the illegal industry is the trafficking of fighting birds from game fowl yards across the country.

Gamefowl yards are properties where hundreds, if not thousands, of roosters are bred and sold for the purpose of fighting. Birds are raised outside with minimal shelter, and sold domestically and internationally for hundreds or thousands of dollars per bird. These birds are bred to be hyperaggressive and, as a result, are typically housed individually in small cages, tethered to stakes, or kept in A-frame or barrel shelters to prevent fighting and maintain conditioning.

Issue

Although illegal in California, cockfighting activities continue to persist throughout the state because it is difficult to prove roosters are possessed with the intent to fight them.

Recent seizures include:

- Federal case in Ceres where nearly 3,000 roosters were seized (2019)
- Case in Val Verdewhere where 7,000 birds were seized (2017)
- Case in Chatsworth where more than 2,000 birds were seized (2020)

Additionally, a brief online research study in 2024 documented evidence of 368 gamefowl yards in the state, likely only a fraction of the actual number and thousands of social media posts selling rooster breeds notorious for fighting.

Gamefowl are a risk to the spread of avian disease, including avian flu, because they are raised outside without protection from wild birds, transported without oversight, and often exposed to bloody birds under stressful fighting conditions. In the last three years, more than 23 million birds in backyard and commercial flocks in California have been killed due to avian flu, having a significant impact on the state's poultry industry. Especially worrisome, since 2024 avian flu has also infected over 924 dairy cattle and 66 people in the U.S. including the first human death in Louisiana earlier this year.

Solution

The Cockfighting Cruelty Act builds upon California's role as a national leader in the fight against animal cruelty and cracks down on an industry that profits solely from the pain and suffering of animals. Modeled after existing California county ordinances, this bill will address game fowl yards in the state and safeguard local communities from the cruelty, noise, avian disease, and criminal activities linked to cockfighting.

For More Information:

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Support

- Humane World for Animals (*formerly Humane Society of the United States*) - (Sponsor)
- Social Compassion in Legislation
- Animal Legal Defense Fund



Assemblymember Chris Rogers, 2nd Assembly District

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- California Farm Bureau
- California Poultry Federation
- San Francisco SPCA