

# Florida Cockfighting Arrest Shines Light on Much-Needed FIGHT Act to Crack Down on Barbaric Crime

*Florida Rep. Michael Bilirakis, along with 10 other U.S. House members from the state, have cosponsored the FIGHT Act in Congress*

HOMOSASSA, FLORIDA, USA, March 14, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Animal Wellness Action praised Citrus County Sheriff's Office deputies for arresting a 51-year-old man for animal fighting, according to a Facebook Post from the sheriff's office.

Deputies at the man's home found and seized 26 injured and caged roosters and testosterone used for fighting roosters, plus a training arena. He admitted to selling and shipping roosters to Puerto Rico and Ohio.



Cockfighting Match

"We praise the Citrus County Sheriff's Office for acting with urgency on a tip about cockfighting in its locale and the trafficking of animals for fights as far away as Puerto Rico," said Wayne Pacelle, president of Animal Wellness Action. "It is startling how widespread these practices are, and that's precisely why we need law enforcement to act as Citrus County did and why we need to upgrade the federal law against animal fighting."

Pacelle's nonprofit is at the forefront of passing the Fighting Inhumane Gambling and High-Risk Trafficking (FIGHT) Act to crack down on the barbaric and lawless practices of dogfighting and cockfighting. Republican Rep. Michael Bilirakis, representing Florida's 9th congressional district is a cosponsor. Also cosponsoring from the Tampa Bay region are Reps. Vern Buchanan, R-16; Anna Paulina Luna, R-13; and Laurel Lee, R-15. Other cosponsors from Florida include Lois Frankel, D-22; Maxwell Frost, D-10; Matt Gaetz, R-1; Carlos Gimenez, R-28, Bill Posey, R-8; Maria Elvira Salazar, R-27; and Mike Waltz, R-6.

The FIGHT Act would allow for citizen suits against perpetrators, ban online gambling on animal fights, allow for criminal forfeiture of property used to commit animal fighting crimes, and forbid



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the use of the U.S. mail to ship adult roosters.

The FIGHT Act has endorsements from [500 organizations and agencies](#), including the Florida Sheriffs' Association, from the domains of animal welfare, law enforcement, agriculture, gaming, and conservation. No other animal welfare legislation has as much bipartisan support as H.R. 2742 and S. 1529

"The federal government can play an essential role in helping us enforce the laws to halt inhumane animal fights," wrote Sheriff [Bill Leeper](#) of Nassau County and president of the Florida Sheriffs Association in its

endorsement of the FIGHT Act. "These are often complex operations, requiring multiple agencies stretching across states, territories, and even nations. Sheriffs have finite resources and may be unable to conduct a complete investigation if an animal fighting ring stretches across county or state lines."

Florida's former state Agriculture Commissioner Nikki Fried said this about animal fighting: "Such abhorrent behavior will not be tolerated – be it illegal conduct hurting Floridians or cruelty against animals."

#### ABOUT

Animal Wellness Action is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(4) whose mission is to help animals by promoting laws and regulations at federal, state, and local levels that forbid cruelty to all animals. The group also works to enforce existing anti-cruelty and wildlife protection laws. Animal Wellness Action believes helping animals helps us all. X: @AWAction\_News.

The Center for a Humane Economy is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(3) whose mission is to help animals by helping forge a more humane economic order. The first organization of its kind in the animal protection movement, the Center encourages businesses to honor their social responsibilities in a culture where consumers, investors, and other key stakeholders abhor cruelty. The Center believes helping animals helps us all. X: @TheHumaneCenter.

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