

# Fact Sheet

## Crack Down on Animal Fighting Support S.B. 23

### **Dogfighting is a serious problem in the United States.**

Dogfights involve two dogs, specifically bred, conditioned, and trained to fight, who are placed in an enclosed pit for the purpose of gambling and entertainment. Fights average nearly an hour in length and often last more than two hours. Dogs forced to fight are subject to severe injuries and often die of blood loss, shock, dehydration, or infection hours or even days after the fight.

### **Strong anti-dogfighting laws help prevent cruelty and protect the public.**

Dogfighting is an extremely inhumane and cruel activity. Recent arrests have shed light on this epidemic and public outcry for strong anti-dogfighting laws is clear. Dogfights are a public safety risk and often associated with other criminal activities such as gambling, weapons possession, narcotics, and various violent crimes. Dogs used for fighting are bred and trained to be vicious and are a threat to communities.



### **States need felony spectator provisions in dogfighting laws.**

While dogfighting is a felony in 48 states, being a spectator at a dogfight is a felony in 27 states. Having lower penalties for being a spectator at a dogfight is a loophole that makes it more difficult for law enforcement officials to effectively prosecute dogfighters. Typically, organized dogfights occur with several matches held one after the other. When police raid a dogfight it is extremely difficult to differentiate between spectators and participants who were going to fight their dog in the next match. This creates a loophole allowing many dogfighters to avoid prosecution, or be subject to minimal penalties.

### **Spectators finance the organization and promotion of dog fights**

Spectators at a dogfight are there primarily to gamble on the fight. They are knowing participants that often pay an admission fee to attend the fight, thereby helping making dogfights lucrative for fight organizers. Police in Detroit recently interrupted a dog fight and found that spectators had paid \$100 a piece to attend.

### **Spectators that face felony convictions will be more likely to testify against other dogfighters**

Those who attend dog fights are accomplices that enable an illegal activity. But having felony penalties to attend dog fights will put teeth in existing law, and also give prosecutors leverage to coerce spectators to testify against dog fight participants.



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY**  
OF THE UNITED STATES

Celebrating Animals | Confronting Cruelty

2100 L Street, NW Washington, DC 20037