

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2021

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HOUSE BILL 544

Short Title: Revise Animal Fighting Laws. (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives C. Smith, McNeill, Howard, and Carter (Primary Sponsors).  
*For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.*

Referred to: Judiciary 2, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

April 14, 2021

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO CRIMINALIZE THE ACT OF CAUSING A PERSON UNDER EIGHTEEN  
3 YEARS OF AGE TO BE PRESENT AT AN EXHIBITION FEATURING ANIMAL  
4 FIGHTING AND TO EXPAND THE SCOPE OF THE CRIME OF COCKFIGHTING.

5 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

6 **SECTION 1.** G.S. 14-362 reads as rewritten:

7 "**§ 14-362. Cockfighting.**

8 (a) A person who instigates, promotes, conducts, is employed at, allows property under  
9 his ownership or control to be used for, participates as a spectator at, causes a person under 18  
10 years of age to be present at, or profits ~~from~~ from, an exhibition featuring the fighting of a cock  
11 is guilty of a Class I felony. A lease of property that is used or is intended to be used for an  
12 exhibition featuring the fighting of a cock is void, and a lessor who knows this use is made or is  
13 intended to be made of his property is under a duty to evict the lessee immediately.

14 (b) A person who owns, possesses, trains, buys, sells, offers to buy or sell, or transports  
15 a cock, with intent that the cock be used in an exhibition featuring the fighting of that cock with  
16 another cock or another animal, is guilty of a Class I felony.

17 (c) A person who owns, possesses, buys, sells, transfers, or manufactures cock fighting  
18 paraphernalia for the purpose of engaging in or otherwise promoting or facilitating the fighting  
19 or baiting of a cock is guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor. For purposes of this subsection, the term  
20 "cock fighting paraphernalia" means gaffs, slashers, heels, or any other sharp implement  
21 designed to be attached in place of the natural spur of a cock or game fowl.

22 (d) Each violation of this section constitutes a separate offense and shall not merge with  
23 any other offense."

24 **SECTION 2.** G.S. 14-362.1 reads as rewritten:

25 "**§ 14-362.1. Animal fights and baiting, other than cock fights, dog fights and dog baiting.**

26 ...

27 (c) A person who participates as a spectator ~~at~~ at, or causes a person under 18 years of  
28 age to be present at, an exhibition featuring the fighting or baiting of an animal, other than a cock  
29 or a dog, is guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor.

30 ...."

31 **SECTION 3.** G.S. 14-362.2 reads as rewritten:

32 "**§ 14-362.2. Dog fighting and baiting.**

33 ...



1 (c) A person who participates as a spectator ~~at~~at, or causes a person under 18 years of  
2 age to be present at, an exhibition featuring the baiting of a dog or the fighting of a dog with  
3 another dog or with another animal is guilty of a Class H felony.

4 ...."

5 **SECTION 4.** This act becomes effective December 1, 2021, and applies to offenses  
6 committed on or after that date.