

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 6568

As Reported by House Committee On:
Judiciary

Title: An act relating to animal fighting.

Brief Description: Modifying animal fighting provisions.

Sponsors: Senators Regala, Carrell and Oke.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Judiciary: 2/22/06 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Bill
(As Amended by House Committee)

- Amends the crime of animal fighting to include being a spectator of or preparing an animal fight and to add as an element of the crime that certain proscribed conduct be done knowingly.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Lantz, Chair; Flannigan, Vice Chair; Williams, Vice Chair; Priest, Ranking Minority Member; Rodne, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Kirby, Serben, Springer and Wood.

Staff: Edie Adams (786-7180).

Background:

Animal fighting is an unranked class C felony offense under the state's animal cruelty laws. A person commits the crime of animal fighting if the person does any of the following:

- owns, possesses, breeds, trains, buys, sells, advertises, or offers for sale any animal with the intent that the animal will be engaged in an exhibition of animal fighting;
- promotes, organizes, conducts, participates in, advertises, or performs any service in the furtherance of an animal fight;
- transports spectators to an animal fight;
- serves as a stakeholder for any money wagered on an animal fight;
- keeps or uses a place for animal fighting, allows a place to be used for animal fighting, or accepts payment for admission to an animal fight; or

- takes or receives a stray or pet animal with the intent of using the stray animal or pet animal for animal fighting or for training or baiting for animal fighting.

Last session the crime of animal fighting was substantially revised. The crime was increased from a gross misdemeanor to a class C felony and the types of activities that constitute animal fighting were expanded. However, the provision making it a crime to be a spectator at an animal fight was removed.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The crime of animal fighting is amended to require that the person act knowingly with respect to promoting, organizing, conducting, participating in, advertising, performing a service for, transporting spectators to, or serving as a stakeholder for, an animal fight. In addition, the crime is amended to include a person who knowingly is a spectator of or prepares an animal fight. The element of serving as a stakeholder for money wagering is amended to provide that it applies to wagering at any place or building.

Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The amended bill removes unnecessary language and clarifies language in the original bill.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: When the law was amended last session, being a spectator of an animal fight was left out because it was thought that "participating" in an animal fight would cover being a spectator. However, from conversations with prosecutors, it appears that needs to be specifically included in the language. Also, it is important to include a "knowingly" requirement so that someone who inadvertently ends up at an animal fight can't be prosecuted.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Carey Morris, Humane Society of the United States.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.