



ASSOCIATION OF
PROSECUTING
ATTORNEYS

Statement of Principles on Animal Fighting

As a national association dedicated to supporting and enhancing the effectiveness of prosecutors in their efforts to create safer communities, ensure justice, and uphold public safety, the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys (APA) hereby submits this statement of principles regarding the prosecution of animal fighting crimes.

Recognizing animals' capacity to suffer, every state's criminal code and the federal government punish animal fighting at the felony level.

There is a direct link between the criminal acts of animal fighting and other serious felonies, such as illegal firearms and gambling, drug distribution, money laundering, aggravated assaults, child pornography, human trafficking, and gang activity. Experts recognize the need for higher penalties for animal fighting and its associated activities, including the trafficking of animals and being a spectator to a fight. Holding those perpetrators to felony-level penalties would assign more accountability for the damage they have caused to their communities.

Animal fighting is a crime of violence, injuring and killing thousands of animals per year. It is a crime that warrants felony accountability. Animal fighting perpetuates a climate of violence, fear, and intimidation to both those involved as well as witnesses and the larger community.