

Wayne Allard

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ALLARD COCKFIGHTING BILL APPROVED BY SENATE LEGISLATION BANS INTERSTATE TRANSPORT OF ROOSTERS FOR "COCKFIGHTING" PURPOSES

Washington, D.C. – The U.S. Senate on Wednesday approved an amendment offered by U.S. Senator Wayne Allard (R-CO) to the Farm Bill (S. 1731) that would amend the Animal Welfare Act to make it unlawful for the interstate transportation of roosters for the purpose of "cockfighting." The Senate's action is a huge victory for the Colorado lawmaker who has waged a three-year battle to enact legislation closing the current loop-hole.

"After more than a three-year battle, we have scored a big victory in the U.S. Senate," Allard said following the vote. "As a veterinarian, I view 'cockfighting' as an inherently cruel and inhumane practice. I believe it is time to give law enforcement officials greater leverage to enforce their current state laws that prohibit this activity."

Allard began his effort to plug the 'cockfighting' loop-hole that exists in the Animal Welfare Act in January, 1999. In the Summer of 2000, the Senate Agriculture Committee approved his legislation, but it failed to gain Senate passage before the end of the 106th session. Last year, he re-introduced his legislation (S. 345) with Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Tom Harkin (D-IA). Allard's legislation was approved by the House of Representatives last year, when U.S. Representatives Tom Tancredo (R-CO) and Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) added the legislation to the House Farm Bill.

"We are enormously grateful for Senator Allard's leadership on this animal fighting issue," stated Wayne Pacelle, a senior vice president for The Humane Society of the United States. "Cockfighting is a gruesome and barbaric activity, and it should have no protection under state or federal law."

Since the language in the Senate Farm Bill is the same as the House Farm Bill it will not need to be approved by a House and Senate Conference Committee, which will work out the differences between the Senate and House versions.

"We still have a couple of hurdles to clear, but today's action by the Senate ensures we will have this language in the Farm Bill that will be presented to President Bush," added Allard. "Local law enforcement will soon have at their disposal necessary tools to begin shutting down those who choose to violate state laws which currently outlaw cockfighting."

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