

Dog Fighting

What is dog fighting? Dog fighting is a sadistic "contest" in which two dogs—specifically bred, conditioned, and trained to fight—are placed in a pit (generally a small arena enclosed by plywood walls) to fight each other for the spectators' entertainment and gambling. Fights average nearly an hour in length and often last more than two hours. Dogfights end when one of the dogs will not or cannot continue.

Because dog fighting yields such large profits for participants, the minor penalties associated with misdemeanor convictions are not a sufficient deterrent. Dogfighters merely absorb these fines as part of the cost of doing business. The cruelty inherent in dog fighting should be punished by more than a slap on the hand. Dog fighting is not a spur-of-the-moment act; it is a premeditated and cruel practice.

Those involved in dog fighting go to extensive lengths to avoid detection by law enforcement, so investigations can be difficult, dangerous, and expensive.

Dog fighting is illegal in all 50 states and a felony offense in almost every state.

Being a spectator should also be a felony. Spectators provide much of the profit associated with dog fighting. The money generated by admission fees and gambling helps keep this "sport" alive. Because dogfights are illegal and therefore not widely publicized, spectators do not merely happen upon a fight; they seek it out. They are willing participants who support a criminal activity through their paid admission and attendance.

What can you do to help stop dog fighting?

- Write letters to the editor about dog fighting. Explain the inhumane treatment of the animals and the negative effects on our society. For the Florida Today paper mail letters to:

Your Views FLORIDA TODAY

P.O. Box 419000 Melbourne, FL 32941-9000

Fax letters to: (321) 255-9550

E-mail letters to: letters@floridatoday.com

- Write to local law enforcement officials and judges to urge them to take the issue seriously.

Telephone the Brevard County Sheriff's Office
Community Relations/Public Information Officer at
(321) 264-7788 or e-mail:

andrew.walters@bcso.us

Mail letters to:

Sheriff Jack Parker

Brevard County Sheriff's Office

700 Park Avenue, Bldg A

Titusville, FL 32780

EIGHTEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT BREVARD COUNTY

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- Contact your member of the U.S. House of Representatives and your two U.S. Senators. Let them know that you feel strongly about this issue and urge them to support legislation designed to stop it.

Senator Mel Martinez

356 Russell Senate Office Building Washington,
DC 20510

Phone: (202) 224-3041

<http://martinez.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=ContactInformation.ContactForm>

Senator Bill Nelson

716 Hart Senate Office Building Washington, DC
20510

Phone: (202) 224-5274

<http://billnelson.senate.gov/contact/email.cfm>

Representative Dave Weldon, 15th
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Address: 2347 Rayburn House Office Building
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Contact Page: www.house.gov/writerep

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