

Senate Bill 255

By: Senators Payne of the 54th, Robertson of the 29th, Albers of the 56th, Kennedy of the 18th, Hufstetler of the 52nd and others

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Part 1 of Article 2 of Chapter 12 of Title 16 of the Official Code of Georgia
2 Annotated, relating to gambling, so as to revise provisions relative to dogfighting; to prohibit
3 fighting of dogs and game cocks; to prohibit possession or sale of fighting related objects;
4 to provide for punishment; to provide for definitions; to amend Code Section 4-8-27 of the
5 Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to certificates of registration, requirements for
6 issuance of certificate, individuals excluded from receiving registration, limitation of
7 ownership, and annual renewal, so as to make conforming changes; to provide for related
8 matters; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

10 **SECTION 1.**

11 Part 1 of Article 2 of Chapter 12 of Title 16 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
12 relating to gambling, is amended by revising Code Section 16-12-37, relating to dogfighting,
13 as follows:

14 "16-12-37.

15 (a) As used in this Code section, the term:

16 (1) 'Dog' ~~'dog'~~ means any domestic canine.

17 (2) 'Fighting related objects' means equipment, products, or materials of any kind that
 18 are used, intended for use, or designed for use in the training, preparation, and
 19 conditioning of a dog or game cock for fighting or for the furtherance of such act.

20 (3) 'Game cock' means a domesticated fowl that is bred, reared, or trained for the
 21 purposes of fighting with other fowl.

22 (4) 'Minor' means any individual under the age of 18 years.

23 (b) Any person who:

24 (1) Owns, possesses, trains, transports, or sells any dog with the intent that such dog shall
 25 be engaged in fighting with another dog;

26 (2) For amusement or gain, causes any dog to fight with another dog or for amusement
 27 or gain, causes any dogs to injure each other;

28 (3) Owns, possesses, trains, transports, or sells any game cock with the intent that such
 29 game cock shall be engaged in fighting with other fowl;

30 (4) For amusement or gain, causes any game cock to fight with other fowl or for
 31 amusement or gain, causes any game cocks to injure each other;

32 ~~(3)~~(5) Wagers money or anything of value on the result of such ~~dogfighting~~ fighting;

33 ~~(4)~~(6) Knowingly permits any act in violation of paragraph (1) or (2) of this subsection
 34 on any premises under the ownership or control of such person or knowingly aids or abets
 35 any such act; or

36 ~~(5)~~(7) Knowingly promotes, or advertises, or charges an admission fee for an exhibition
 37 of fighting with another dog in violation of this subsection shall be guilty of a felony and,
 38 upon the first conviction thereof, shall be punished by imprisonment of not less than one
 39 nor more than five years, a fine of not less than \$5,000.00, or both ~~such fine and~~
 40 imprisonment. On a second or subsequent conviction, such person shall be punished by
 41 imprisonment of not less than one nor more than ten years, a fine of not less
 42 than \$15,000.00, or both ~~such fine and imprisonment.~~ The court, as part of the sentence,
 43 may prohibit the offender from owning, possessing, or exercising control over any animal

44 within the species for which the conviction is based for a period not to exceed five years
45 for a first conviction and ten years for any second or subsequent conviction; provided,
46 however, that no sentence shall prohibit the offender from conduct for which he or she
47 has lawful employment. Each act in violation of this subsection shall constitute a
48 separate offense.

49 (c) Any person who is knowingly present only as a spectator or who causes or permits a
50 minor to be present at any place for the fighting of dogs or game cocks shall, upon a first
51 conviction thereof, be guilty of a misdemeanor of a high and aggravated nature. On a
52 second conviction, such person shall be guilty of a felony and shall be punished by
53 imprisonment of not less than one nor more than five years, a fine of not less than
54 \$5,000.00, or both ~~such fine and imprisonment~~. On a third or subsequent conviction, such
55 person shall be punished by imprisonment of not less than one nor more than ten years, a
56 fine of not less than \$15,000.00, or both ~~such fine and imprisonment~~. Each act in violation
57 of this subsection shall constitute a separate offense.

58 (d) Any dog or game cock subject to fighting may be impounded pursuant to the
59 provisions of Code Sections 4-11-9.2 through 4-11-9.6.

60 (e) Any person who knowingly possesses, purchases, or sells fighting related objects with
61 the intent that such objects be used in promoting, facilitating, training for, or otherwise
62 participating in an exhibition of dog or game cock fighting shall be guilty of a
63 misdemeanor of a high and aggravated nature.

64 (f) This Code section shall not prohibit, impede, or otherwise interfere with animal
65 husbandry, training techniques, competition, events, shows, or practices not otherwise
66 specifically prohibited by law and shall not apply to the following activities:

67 (1) Owning, using, breeding, training, or equipping any animal to pursue, take, hunt, or
68 recover wildlife or any animal lawfully hunted under Title 27 or participating in hunting
69 or fishing in accordance with the provisions of Title 27 and rules and regulations

70 promulgated pursuant thereto as such rules and regulations existed on the date specified
71 in Code Section 27-1-39;

72 (2) Owning, using, breeding, training, or equipping dogs to work livestock for
73 agricultural purposes in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Commissioner
74 of Agriculture as such rules and regulations existed on January 1, 2008;

75 (3) Owning, using, breeding, training, or equipping dogs for law enforcement purposes;
76 or

77 (4) Owning, using, breeding, training, or equipping any animal to control damage from
78 nuisance or pest species in and around structures or agricultural operations."

79 **SECTION 2.**

80 Code Section 4-8-27 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to certificates of
81 registration, requirements for issuance of certificate, individuals excluded from receiving
82 registration, limitation of ownership, and annual renewal, is amended by revising
83 paragraph (2) of subsection (f) as follows:

84 "(2) The felony of dogfighting or game cock fighting as provided for in Code
85 Section 16-12-37 or the felony of aggravated cruelty to animals as provided for in Code
86 Section 16-12-4; or"

87 **SECTION 3.**

88 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.