

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2025

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SENATE BILL 591

Short Title: Revise Animal Fighting Laws. (Public)

Sponsors: Senator Lowe (Primary Sponsor).

Referred to: Rules and Operations of the Senate

March 26, 2025

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
AN ACT TO PROHIBIT THE ATTENDANCE OF MINORS AT CERTAIN EXHIBITIONS  
OF ANIMAL FIGHTING, TO PROHIBIT POSSESSION OF CERTAIN ANIMALS WITH  
THE INTENT THAT THEY BE USED IN EXHIBITIONS OF ANIMAL FIGHTING, AND  
TO PROHIBIT THE POSSESSION OF ANIMAL FIGHTING PARAPHERNALIA.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.** G.S. 14-362 reads as rewritten:

**"§ 14-362. Cockfighting.**

(a) A person who instigates, promotes, conducts, is employed at, allows property under his ownership or control to be used for, participates as a spectator at, causes or allows a minor under 18 years of age to be present at, or profits ~~from~~ from an exhibition featuring the fighting of a cock is guilty of a Class ~~H~~ felony. A lease of property that is used or is intended to be used for an exhibition featuring the fighting of a cock is void, and a lessor who knows this use is made or is intended to be made of his property is under a duty to evict the lessee immediately.

(b) A person who knowingly owns, possesses, trains, buys, sells, offers to buy or sell, or transports a cock to be used in an exhibition featuring the fighting of that cock with another cock or another animal is guilty of a Class H felony."

**SECTION 2.** G.S. 14-362.2 reads as rewritten:

**"§ 14-362.2. Dog fighting and baiting.**

(a) A person who instigates, promotes, conducts, is employed at, provides a dog for, causes or allows a minor under 18 years of age to be present at, allows property under the person's ownership or control to be used for, gambles on, or profits from an exhibition featuring the baiting of a dog or the fighting of a dog with another dog or with another animal is guilty of a Class H felony. A lease of property that is used or is intended to be used for an exhibition featuring the baiting of a dog or the fighting of a dog with another dog or with another animal is void, and a lessor who knows this use is made or is intended to be made of the lessor's property is under a duty to evict the lessee immediately.

(b) A person who knowingly owns, possesses, ~~or trains~~ trains, buys, sells, offers to buy or sell, or transports a dog ~~with the intent that the dog to~~ be used in an exhibition featuring the baiting of that dog or the fighting of that dog with another dog or with another animal is guilty of a Class H felony.

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**SECTION 3.** Article 47 of Chapter 14 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

**"§ 14-362.2A. Animal fighting paraphernalia.**



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(a) For purposes of this section, the term "animal fighting paraphernalia" means equipment, products, implements, and materials of any kind that are used, intended for use, or designed for use in the training, preparation, conditioning, or furtherance of animal fighting, and includes, but is not limited to, the following: breaking sticks, cat mills, fighting pits, springpoles, or gaffs, slashers, heels, or any other sharp implement designed to be attached in place of the natural spur of a cock or game fowl. In determining whether an object is animal fighting paraphernalia under this section, the court shall consider all of the following:

- (1) Any prior convictions under federal or state law relating to animal fighting.
- (2) The proximity of the object in time and space to the direct violation of this G.S. 14-362, 14-362.1, or 14-362.2.
- (3) Direct or circumstantial evidence of the intent of the accused to deliver the object to persons whom he or she knows or should reasonably know intend to use the object to facilitate a violation of G.S. 14-362, 14-362.1, or 14-362.2.
- (4) Oral or written instructions provided with or in the vicinity of the object concerning its use.
- (5) Descriptive materials accompanying the object which explain or depict its use.
- (6) Any other logically relevant factors.

(b) A person who possesses, buys, sells, or manufactures animal fighting paraphernalia with the intent to promote, engage in, or facilitate a violation of G.S. 14-362, 14-362.1, or 14-362.2, is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

(c) Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the training of animals or the use of equipment in the training of animals for any purpose not prohibited by law."

**SECTION 4.** If any provision of this act or its application is held invalid, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications of this act that can be given effect without the invalid provisions or application and, to this end, the provisions of this act are severable.

**SECTION 5.** This act becomes effective December 1, 2025, and applies to offenses committed on or after that date.