

Animal Rights in Georgia

Georgia's legislative approach to animal abuse and animal rights are a disgrace. They seem to have intentionally been made vague - or nonexistent - to allow for loopholes that we see exploited every day.

Georgia currently has NO state laws that specifically regulate or restrict the use of animals in pharmaceutical or chemical research or testing beyond the general exemptions contained in Georgia's animal cruelty statute; [GA Code § 16-12-4 - Cruelty to Animals \(2024\)](#). All oversight of animal research in Georgia is governed by federal law, including the Animal Welfare Act, National Institute of Health (NIH) policies, and Institutional Animal Care and Use Committees (IACUCs).

Cockfighting and dogfighting are illegal in Georgia. But we are the ONLY state in the country without a specific state law that completely criminalizes it. It's a federal felony to buy, sell, deliver, possess, train, or transport any animal for participation in animal fighting, or to bring a minor to such an event. But Georgia doesn't enforce that with any regularity or consistency, which allows this horrific "sport" to continue - mainly because money is being made off it.

Because of this short-sighted approach, I'm partnering with [Humane World for Animals](#) (formerly known as "*The Humane Society*") to research and create significant legislation in Georgia that would modernize our state's approach to animal research and testing, while encouraging scientifically validated alternatives and ensuring appropriate protections for all animals. Some of the priorities include:

- Improving and expanding enforcement tools and punitive actions for investigations of agricultural and domestic animal cruelty, neglect and abuse;
- Strengthening Georgia's animal fighting laws, particularly legislation outlawing cockfighting, dogfighting and related activities;
- Outlawing illegal, unpermitted petting zoos and similar commercial animal attractions;
- Companion animal welfare and shelter modernization;
- Wildlife trafficking legislation;
- Responsible breeding and consumer protection initiatives.

We'll also use this legislation to strengthen and streamline other emerging animal welfare policies that impact public safety, law enforcement, local governments, and animal welfare statewide - such as properly funded and supported animal shelters, hospitals and clinics.

This issue has been brought before the Georgia General Assembly nearly a dozen times in the past 25 years. It has always failed to be brought to a vote.

I intend to force that vote.

