



THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES

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Virginia Voters Oppose Cruel Practice of "Fox Penning" by More Than 8-to-1 Margin

The Humane Society of the United States and the ASPCA® Join Legislators in Support of Bill to Outlaw Fox Pens; Animal Advocates Lobby for Additional Animal Protection Legislation

RICHMOND, Va. —A new poll conducted by Mason-Dixon Polling & Research shows that Virginia voters overwhelmingly oppose the abuse of animals in "fox penning" operations by a more than 8-to-1 margin—and a majority support legislation to prohibit the practice. Fox pens are fenced enclosures where dogs are released in competitions to chase down and torment captive foxes, often killing them. In just three years, nearly 4,000 foxes were subjected to these unethical and inhumane events.

The statewide survey reveals that 67 percent of Virginia voters oppose the practice of fox penning and just 8 percent support it. The survey results were consistent in every political demographic, with every group and party affiliation opposed to penning. Voters statewide support legislation prohibiting the practice by a margin of more than 2-to-1.

To see the full results of the poll, click [here](#).

The poll results were released at a press conference today calling on lawmakers to support the legislation, SB 202 sponsored by Sen. David W. Marsden, D-37, and HB 695 sponsored by Del. Kenneth R. Plum, D-36. "This poll leaves no doubt where Virginians stand on the gruesome practice of fox penning," said Laura Donahue, Virginia state director for The HSUS. "Fox pens clash with our commonwealth's long tradition of fair and humane wildlife policies, so we thank Senator Marsden and Delegate Plum for introducing legislation to end this cruelty. It's time to shut them down once and for all."

"Fox pens are the last legal blood sport in Virginia," said Sen. Marsden. "They represent a fundamental departure from the wildlife policies in the commonwealth, and I look forward to working with my colleagues in the Senate to deal with this serious problem."

"It is clear that as Virginians learn about the practice of fox penning, most decide, as I have, that it is a repulsive

practice that should be outlawed," said Del. Plum.

The focus on fox penning kicked off Humane Lobby Day, sponsored by The HSUS and the ASPCA®. More than 170 citizens and representatives from local shelters and animal rescue groups met with lawmakers to voice support for animal welfare legislation.

"There are several critical pieces of humane legislation pending in Virginia this legislative session, and Humane Lobby Day is a unique opportunity for animal advocates from across the state to meet with their elected officials and have their voices heard," said Ann Church, vice president of state affairs for the ASPCA. "It's important for Virginia lawmakers to hear from their constituents and enact stronger laws to protect animals against inherently cruel activities like fox penning."

In addition to calling for an end to fox penning, Humane Lobby Day attendees are urging support of the following:

- HB363, supported by Dels. Patrick Hope, D-47, and Jennifer McClellan, D-71, to protect pets in domestic violence situations from falling victim to abuse or neglect. The measures would allow courts in Virginia to issue an injunction for protection against domestic violence, granting the petitioner the exclusive care of a pet.
- SB 477/HB1242, sponsored by Del. Christopher Peace, R-97, and Sen. Louise Lucas, D-18, would restrict the ownership of certain dangerous wild animals to only experienced and qualified individuals.
- HB1159, sponsored by Del. Mark Sickles, D-43, would prohibit the sale of shark fins, thus removing Virginia from the cruel and destructive shark fin trade.

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