

PRESS RELEASE

Louisiana Now the Only State to Still Allow The Brutal Blood Sport of Cockfighting

NEW ORLEANS, LA – (3/12/07) Today New Mexico became the most recent state to ban cockfighting and with that passage Louisiana now carries the blemish of being the only state in the country that still allows the activity. This is true despite the fact that 82% of Louisiana residents favor a legislative ban on an activity recognized by most as a cruel and barbaric blood sport.

Earlier today, New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson signed legislation that makes cockfighting a crime in his state, and cockfighting opponents are now turning their focus solely on Louisiana which has yet to outlaw the activity. The Louisiana SPCA (LA/SPCA), a strident and longtime advocate to end cockfighting, feels that the renewed attention on Louisiana will not be lost on state lawmakers, and that the pendulum to end cockfighting is clearly swinging in the favor of those who want to see an end to an activity that encourages roosters to brutally fight one another to their death.

“The whole country is already focused on Louisiana due to our massive rebuilding and recovery efforts, and no one wants to see Louisiana blemished with the stigma of being the only state that still allows such a brutal and inhumane practice,” said Laura Maloney of the LA/SPCA.

“Cockfighting is an outdated blood sport and with it comes the additional stain of illegal gambling, violence and crime. We feel the tide has turned and we’re confident our legislature is aware of the cultural shift.”

The LA/SPCA has worked tirelessly to lobby Louisiana lawmakers during past legislative sessions. For the first time last year an anti-cockfighting bill authored by Senator Arthur Lentini made it as far as the legislature’s Agricultural Senate Committee. Although the bill was finally defeated in the full House, cockfighting opponents saw it as a promising step in the right direction. The LA/SPCA intends to bring its battle back to lawmakers with the opening of the 2007 legislative session in April where a bill to outlaw the practice is sure to be introduced.

In 2004, a poll conducted by Hill Research Consultants indicated that 82% of the Louisiana residents favor a legislative ban against cockfighting. Seventy-eight percent of New Orleanians feel strongly that the legislature should outlaw the sport. Even 77% of citizens in Lafayette, where the activity is often practiced, believe the sport should be illegal.

Along with the horrific images of a brutal practice where roosters are fitted with sharp razors intended to gouge and puncture one another until one dies, the sport is also a concern to the LA/SPCA and others because young children are often in the audience and exposed to the activity. “Cockfighting is often billed as a form of ‘family entertainment’ by its supporters and young children who are often in the audience observing this barbaric sport are desensitized to violence,” added Maloney.