

# Criminal Penalties for Exposing Children to Animal Abuse

(Last updated September 2014)

This compilation includes laws which enhance the stated penalty for any form of animal abuse based on the presence or use of a child during the crime or criminalize actions with animals due to the presence of children. Please note there may have been changes to this area of law since our last update. Please feel free to contact us at 703-549-9222 for further discussion on updates to the information included in this document.

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## California

### ***Cal. Penal Code § 310 (2014) Minors Attending Prizefight or Cockfight***

(a) Any minor under 16 years of age who visits or attends any prizefight or place where any prizefight is advertised to take place, and any owner, lessee, or proprietor, or the agent of any owner, lessee, or proprietor of any place where any prizefight is advertised or represented to take place who admits any minor to a place where any prizefight is advertised or represented to take place or who admits, sells, or gives to any minor a ticket or other paper by which that minor may be admitted to a place where a prizefight is advertised to take place, is guilty of a misdemeanor, and is punishable by a fine not exceeding one hundred dollars (\$ 100) or by imprisonment in the county jail for not more than 25 days.

(b) Any minor under 16 years of age who visits or attends any cockfight or place where any cockfight is advertised to take place, and any owner, lessee, or proprietor, or the agent of any owner, lessee, or proprietor of any place where any cockfight is advertised or represented to take place who admits any minor to a place where any cockfight is advertised or represented to take place or who admits, sells, or gives to any minor a ticket or other paper by which that minor may be admitted to a place where a cockfight is advertised to take place, is guilty of a misdemeanor, and is punishable by a fine not exceeding five hundred dollars (\$500) or by imprisonment in the county jail for not more than 25 days.

## Florida

***Fla. Stat. Ann. 800.04 (2014). Lewd or lascivious offenses committed upon or in the presence of persons less than 16 years of age***

**(1) Definitions.**--As used in this section:

(a) "Sexual activity" means the oral, anal, or vaginal penetration by, or union with, the sexual organ of another or the anal or vaginal penetration of another by any other object; however, sexual activity does not include an act done for a bona fide medical purpose.

(b) "Consent" means intelligent, knowing, and voluntary consent, and does not include submission by coercion.

(c) "Coercion" means the use of exploitation, bribes, threats of force, or intimidation to gain cooperation or compliance.

(d) "Victim" means a person upon whom an offense described in this section was committed or attempted or a person who has reported a violation of this section to a law enforcement officer.

**(2) Prohibited defenses.**--Neither the victim's lack of chastity nor the victim's consent is a defense to the crimes proscribed by this section.

**(3) Ignorance or belief of victim's age.**--The perpetrator's ignorance of the victim's age, the victim's misrepresentation of his or her age, or the perpetrator's bona fide belief of the victim's age cannot be raised as a defense in a prosecution under this section.

**(4) Lewd or lascivious battery.**--A person who:

(a) Engages in sexual activity with a person 12 years of age or older but less than 16 years of age; or

(b) Encourages, forces, or entices any person less than 16 years of age to engage in sadomasochistic abuse, sexual bestiality, prostitution, or any other act involving sexual activity

commits lewd or lascivious battery, a felony of the second degree, punishable as provided in [s. 775.082](#), [s. 775.083](#), or [s. 775.084](#).

**(5) Lewd or lascivious molestation.**--

(a) A person who intentionally touches in a lewd or lascivious manner the breasts, genitals, genital area, or buttocks, or the clothing covering them, of a person less than 16 years of age, or forces or entices a person under 16 years of age to so touch the perpetrator, commits lewd or lascivious molestation.

(b) An offender 18 years of age or older who commits lewd or lascivious molestation against a victim less than 12 years of age commits a life felony, punishable as provided in [s. 775.082\(3\)\(a\)](#) 4.

(c)1. An offender less than 18 years of age who commits lewd or lascivious molestation against a victim less than 12 years of age; or

2. An offender 18 years of age or older who commits lewd or lascivious molestation against a victim 12 years of age or older but less than 16 years of age

commits a felony of the second degree, punishable as provided in [s. 775.082](#), [s. 775.083](#), or [s. 775.084](#).

(d) An offender less than 18 years of age who commits lewd or lascivious molestation against a victim 12 years of age or older but less than 16 years of age commits a felony of the third degree, punishable as provided in [s. 775.082](#), [s. 775.083](#), or [s. 775.084](#).

**(6) Lewd or lascivious conduct.--**

(a) A person who:

1. Intentionally touches a person under 16 years of age in a lewd or lascivious manner; or

2. Solicits a person under 16 years of age to commit a lewd or lascivious act

commits lewd or lascivious conduct.

(b) An offender 18 years of age or older who commits lewd or lascivious conduct commits a felony of the second degree, punishable as provided in [s. 775.082](#), [s. 775.083](#), or [s. 775.084](#).

(c) An offender less than 18 years of age who commits lewd or lascivious conduct commits a felony of the third degree, punishable as provided in [s. 775.082](#), [s. 775.083](#), or [s. 775.084](#).

**(7) Lewd or lascivious exhibition.--**

(a) A person who:

1. Intentionally masturbates;

2. Intentionally exposes the genitals in a lewd or lascivious manner; or

3. Intentionally commits any other sexual act that does not involve actual physical or sexual contact with the victim, including, but not limited to, sadomasochistic abuse, sexual bestiality, or the simulation of any act involving sexual activity

in the presence of a victim who is less than 16 years of age, commits lewd or lascivious exhibition.

(b) An offender 18 years of age or older who commits a lewd or lascivious exhibition commits a felony of the second degree, punishable as provided in [s. 775.082](#), [s. 775.083](#), or [s. 775.084](#).

(c) An offender less than 18 years of age who commits a lewd or lascivious exhibition commits a felony of the third degree, punishable as provided in [s. 775.082](#), [s. 775.083](#), or [s. 775.084](#).

**(8) Exception.**--A mother's breastfeeding of her baby does not under any circumstance constitute a violation of this section.

## Idaho

### ***Idaho Code Ann. § 18-1506A (2014). Ritualized abuse of a child – Exclusions-Penalties-Definition***

(1) A person is guilty of a felony when he commits any of the following acts with, upon, or in the presence of a child as part of a ceremony, rite or any similar observance:

(a) Actually or in simulation, tortures, mutilates or sacrifices any warm-blooded animal or human being;

(b) Forces ingestion, injection or other application of any narcotic, drug, hallucinogen or anaesthetic for the purpose of dulling sensitivity, cognition, recollection of, or resistance to any criminal activity;

(c) Forces ingestion, or external application, of human or animal urine, feces, flesh, blood, bones, body secretions, nonprescribed drugs or chemical compounds;

(d) Involves the child in a mock, unauthorized or unlawful marriage ceremony with another person or representation of any force or deity, followed by sexual contact with the child;

(e) Places a living child into a coffin or open grave containing a human corpse or remains;

(f) Threatens death or serious harm to a child, his parents, family, pets or friends which instills a well-founded fear in the child that the threat will be carried out; or

(g) Unlawfully dissects, mutilates, or incinerates a human corpse.

(2) The provisions of this section shall not be construed to apply to:

(a) Lawful agricultural, animal husbandry, food preparation or wild game hunting and fishing practices and specifically the branding or identification of livestock;

(b) The lawful medical practice of circumcision or any ceremony related thereto; or

(c) Any state or federally approved, licensed or funded research project.

(3) Any person convicted of a violation of this section shall be imprisoned in the state prison for a term of not more than life.

(4) For the purposes of this section, "child" means any person under eighteen (18) years of age.

## **Illinois**

### ***IL ST CH 720 § 5/12-33 (2014). Ritualized abuse of a child***

(a) A person commits ritualized abuse of a child when he or she knowingly commits any of the following acts with, upon, or in the presence of a child as part of a ceremony, rite or any similar observance:

(1) actually or in simulation, tortures, mutilates, or sacrifices any warm-blooded animal or human being;

(2) forces ingestion, injection or other application of any narcotic, drug, hallucinogen or anaesthetic for the purpose of dulling sensitivity, cognition, recollection of, or resistance to any criminal activity;

(3) forces ingestion, or external application, of human or animal urine, feces, flesh, blood, bones, body secretions, nonprescribed drugs or chemical compounds;

(4) involves the child in a mock, unauthorized or unlawful marriage ceremony with another person or representation of any force or deity, followed by sexual contact with the child;

(5) places a living child into a coffin or open grave containing a human corpse or remains;

(6) threatens death or serious harm to a child, his or her parents, family, pets, or friends that instills a well-founded fear in the child that the threat will be carried out; or

(7) unlawfully dissects, mutilates, or incinerates a human corpse.

(b) The provisions of this Section shall not be construed to apply to:

(1) lawful agricultural, animal husbandry, food preparation, or wild game hunting and fishing practices and specifically the branding or identification of livestock;

(2) the lawful medical practice of male circumcision or any ceremony related to male circumcision;

(3) any state or federally approved, licensed, or funded research project; or

(4) the ingestion of animal flesh or blood in the performance of a religious service or ceremony.

(b-5) For the purposes of this Section, “child” means any person under 18 years of age.

(c) Ritualized abuse of a child is a Class 1 felony for a first offense. A second or subsequent conviction for ritualized abuse of a child is a Class X felony for which the offender may be sentenced to a term of natural life imprisonment.

(d) (Blank).

***720 Ill. Comp. Stat. Ann. 5/48-1 (2014). Dog fighting***

Dog fighting. (For other provisions that may apply to dog fighting, see the Humane Care for Animals Act. For provisions similar to this Section that apply to animals other than dogs, see in particular Section 4.01 of the Humane Care for Animals Act.)

(a) No person may own, capture, breed, train, or lease any dog which he or she knows is intended for use in any show, exhibition, program, or other activity featuring or otherwise involving a fight between the dog and any other animal or human, or the intentional killing of any dog for the purpose of sport, wagering, or entertainment.

(b) No person may promote, conduct, carry on, advertise, collect money for or in any other manner assist or aid in the presentation for purposes of sport, wagering, or entertainment of any show, exhibition, program, or other activity involving a fight between 2 or more dogs or any dog and human, or the intentional killing of any dog.

(c) No person may sell or offer for sale, ship, transport, or otherwise move, or deliver or receive any dog which he or she knows has been captured, bred, or trained, or will be used, to fight another dog or human or be intentionally killed for purposes of sport, wagering, or entertainment.

(c-5) No person may solicit a minor to violate this Section.

(d) No person may manufacture for sale, shipment, transportation, or delivery any device or equipment which he or she knows or should know is intended for use in any show, exhibition, program, or other activity featuring or otherwise involving a fight between 2 or more dogs, or any human and dog, or the intentional killing of any dog for purposes of sport, wagering, or entertainment.

(e) No person may own, possess, sell or offer for sale, ship, transport, or otherwise move any equipment or device which he or she knows or should know is intended for use in connection with any show, exhibition, program, or activity featuring or otherwise involving a fight between 2 or more dogs, or any dog and human, or the intentional killing of any dog for purposes of sport, wagering or entertainment.

(f) No person may knowingly make available any site, structure, or facility, whether enclosed or not, that he or she knows is intended to be used for the purpose of conducting any show, exhibition, program, or other activity involving a fight between 2 or more dogs, or any dog and

human, or the intentional killing of any dog or knowingly manufacture, distribute, or deliver fittings to be used in a fight between 2 or more dogs or a dog and human.

(g) No person may knowingly attend or otherwise patronize any show, exhibition, program, or other activity featuring or otherwise involving a fight between 2 or more dogs, or any dog and human, or the intentional killing of any dog for purposes of sport, wagering, or entertainment.

(h) No person may tie or attach or fasten any live animal to any machine or device propelled by any power for the purpose of causing the animal to be pursued by a dog or dogs. This subsection (h) applies only when the dog is intended to be used in a dog fight.

(i) Sentence.

(1) Any person convicted of violating subsection (a), (b), (c), or (h) of this Section is guilty of a Class 4 felony for a first violation and a Class 3 felony for a second or subsequent violation, and may be fined an amount not to exceed \$50,000.

(1.5) A person who knowingly owns a dog for fighting purposes or for producing a fight between 2 or more dogs or a dog and human or who knowingly offers for sale or sells a dog bred for fighting is guilty of a Class 3 felony and may be fined an amount not to exceed \$50,000, if the dog participates in a dogfight and any of the following factors is present:

(i) the dogfight is performed in the presence of a person under 18 years of age;

(ii) the dogfight is performed for the purpose of or in the presence of illegal wagering activity; or

(iii) the dogfight is performed in furtherance of streetgang related activity as defined in Section 10 of the Illinois Streetgang Terrorism Omnibus Prevention Act.

(1.7) A person convicted of violating subsection (c-5) of this Section is guilty of a Class 4 felony.

(2) Any person convicted of violating subsection (d) or (e) of this Section is guilty of a Class 4 felony for a first violation. A second or subsequent violation of subsection (d) or (e) of this Section is a Class 3 felony.

(2.5) Any person convicted of violating subsection (f) of this Section is guilty of a Class 4 felony. Any person convicted of violating subsection (f) of this Section in which the site, structure, or facility made available to violate subsection (f) is located within 1,000 feet of a school, public park, playground, child care institution, day care center, part day child care facility, day care home, group day care home, or a facility providing programs or services exclusively directed toward persons under 18 years of age is guilty of a Class 3 felony for a first violation and a Class 2 felony for a second or subsequent violation.

(3) Any person convicted of violating subsection (g) of this Section is guilty of a Class 4 felony for a first violation. A second or subsequent violation of subsection (g) of this Section is a Class

3 felony. If a person under 13 years of age is present at any show, exhibition, program, or other activity prohibited in subsection (g), the parent, legal guardian, or other person who is 18 years of age or older who brings that person under 13 years of age to that show, exhibition, program, or other activity is guilty of a Class 3 felony for a first violation and a Class 2 felony for a second or subsequent violation.

(i-5) A person who commits a felony violation of this Section is subject to the property forfeiture provisions set forth in Article 124B of the Code of Criminal Procedure of 1963.

(j) Any dog or equipment involved in a violation of this Section shall be immediately seized and impounded under Section 12 of the Humane Care for Animals Act when located at any show, exhibition, program, or other activity featuring or otherwise involving a dog fight for the purposes of sport, wagering, or entertainment.

(k) Any vehicle or conveyance other than a common carrier that is used in violation of this Section shall be seized, held, and offered for sale at public auction by the sheriff's department of the proper jurisdiction, and the proceeds from the sale shall be remitted to the general fund of the county where the violation took place.

(l) Any veterinarian in this State who is presented with a dog for treatment of injuries or wounds resulting from fighting where there is a reasonable possibility that the dog was engaged in or utilized for a fighting event for the purposes of sport, wagering, or entertainment shall file a report with the Department of Agriculture and cooperate by furnishing the owners' names, dates, and descriptions of the dog or dogs involved. Any veterinarian who in good faith complies with the requirements of this subsection has immunity from any liability, civil, criminal, or otherwise, that may result from his or her actions. For the purposes of any proceedings, civil or criminal, the good faith of the veterinarian shall be rebuttably presumed.

(m) In addition to any other penalty provided by law, upon conviction for violating this Section, the court may order that the convicted person and persons dwelling in the same household as the convicted person who conspired, aided, or abetted in the unlawful act that was the basis of the conviction, or who knew or should have known of the unlawful act, may not own, harbor, or have custody or control of any dog or other animal for a period of time that the court deems reasonable.

(n) A violation of subsection (a) of this Section may be inferred from evidence that the accused possessed any device or equipment described in subsection (d), (e), or (h) of this Section, and also possessed any dog.

(o) When no longer required for investigations or court proceedings relating to the events described or depicted therein, evidence relating to convictions for violations of this Section shall be retained and made available for use in training peace officers in detecting and identifying violations of this Section. Such evidence shall be made available upon request to other law enforcement agencies and to schools certified under the Illinois Police Training Act.

(p) For the purposes of this Section, “school” has the meaning ascribed to it in Section 11-9.3 of this Code; and “public park”, “playground”, “child care institution”, “day care center”, “part day child care facility”, “day care home”, “group day care home”, and “facility providing programs or services exclusively directed toward persons under 18 years of age” have the meanings ascribed to them in Section 11-9.4 of this Code.

## **Indiana**

### ***Ind. Code § 35-46-3-12(2014). Beating vertebrate animal***

(a) This section does not apply to a person who euthanizes an injured, a sick, a homeless, or an unwanted domestic animal if:

(1) the person is employed by a humane society, an animal control agency, or a governmental entity operating an animal shelter or other animal impounding facility; and

(2) the person euthanizes the domestic animal in accordance with guidelines adopted by the humane society, animal control agency, or governmental entity operating the animal shelter or other animal impounding facility.

(b) A person who knowingly or intentionally beats a vertebrate animal commits cruelty to an animal, a Class A misdemeanor. However, the offense is a Level 6 felony if:

(1) the person has a previous, unrelated conviction under this section; or

(2) the person committed the offense with the intent to threaten, intimidate, coerce, harass, or terrorize a family or household member.

(c) A person who knowingly or intentionally tortures or mutilates a vertebrate animal commits torturing or mutilating a vertebrate animal, a Level 6 felony.

(d) As used in this subsection, “domestic animal” means an animal that is not wild. The term is limited to:

(1) cattle, calves, horses, mules, swine, sheep, goats, dogs, cats, poultry, ostriches, rhea, and emus; and

(2) an animal of the bovine, equine, ovine, caprine, porcine, canine, feline, camelid, cervidae, or bison species.

A person who knowingly or intentionally kills a domestic animal without the consent of the owner of the domestic animal commits killing a domestic animal, a Level 6 felony.

(e) It is a defense to a prosecution under this section that the accused person:

(1) reasonably believes the conduct was necessary to:

(A) prevent injury to the accused person or another person;

(B) protect the property of the accused person from destruction or substantial damage; or

(C) prevent a seriously injured vertebrate animal from prolonged suffering; or

(2) engaged in a reasonable and recognized act of training, handling, or disciplining the vertebrate animal.

(f) When a court imposes a sentence or enters a dispositional decree under this section, the court:

(1) shall consider requiring:

(A) a person convicted of an offense under this section; or

(B) a child adjudicated a delinquent child for committing an act that would be a crime under this section if committed by an adult;

to receive psychological, behavioral, or other counseling as a part of the sentence or dispositional decree; and

(2) may order an individual described in subdivision (1) to receive psychological, behavioral, or other counseling as a part of the sentence or dispositional decree.

***Ind. Code § 35-46-3-12.5 (2014). Domestic violence animal cruelty***

A person who knowingly or intentionally kills a vertebrate animal with the intent to threaten, intimidate, coerce, harass, or terrorize a family or household member commits domestic violence animal cruelty, a Level 6 felony.

## **Louisiana**

***La. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 14:107.1 (2014). Ritualistic acts***

A. (1) The legislature hereby finds that this enactment is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, morals, safety, and welfare and for the support of state government and its existing public institutions.

(2) The legislature further recognizes that:

(a) The preamble to the Constitution of Louisiana affirmatively states “We, the people of Louisiana, grateful to Almighty God for the civil, political, economic, and religious liberties we enjoy, and desiring to protect individual rights to life, liberty, and property; afford opportunity

for the fullest development of the individual; assure equality of rights; promote the health, safety, education, and welfare of the people; maintain a representative and orderly government; ensure domestic tranquility; provide for the common defense; and secure the blessings of freedom and justice to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this constitution.”

(b) The state, under its police power, may enact laws in order to promote public peace, health, morals, and safety.

B. (1) For purposes of this Subsection, “ritualistic acts” means those acts undertaken as part of a ceremony, rite, initiation, observance, performance, or practice that result in or are intended to result in:

(a) The mutilation, dismemberment, torture, abuse, or sacrifice of animals.

(b) The ingestion of human or animal blood or human or animal waste.

(2) The acts defined in this Subsection are hereby determined to be destructive of the peace, health, morals, and safety of the citizens of this state and are hereby prohibited.

(3) Any person committing, attempting to commit, or conspiring with another to commit a ritualistic act may be sentenced to imprisonment for not more than five years or fined not more than five thousand dollars, or both.

C. (1) No person shall commit ritualistic mutilation, dismemberment, or torture of a human as part of a ceremony, rite, initiation, observance, performance, or practice.

(2) No person shall commit ritualistic sexual abuse of children or of physically or mentally disabled adults as part of a ceremony, rite, initiation, observance, performance, or practice.

(3) No person shall commit ritualistic psychological abuse of children or of physically or mentally disabled adults as part of a ceremony, rite, initiation, observance, performance, or practice.

(4) Any person who commits, attempts to commit, or conspires with another to commit a violation of this Subsection shall be sentenced to imprisonment for not less than five nor more than twenty-five years and may be fined not more than twenty-five thousand dollars.

D. Each violation that occurs under the provisions of this Section shall be considered a separate violation.

E. The provisions of this Section shall not be construed to apply to generally accepted agricultural or horticultural practices and specifically the branding or identification of livestock.

F. The provisions of this Section shall not be construed to apply to any state or federally approved, licensed, or funded research project.

## Oregon

### ***OR ST § 167.320 (2014). Animal abuse in the first degree***

(1) A person commits the crime of animal abuse in the first degree if, except as otherwise authorized by law, the person intentionally, knowingly or recklessly:

(a) Causes serious physical injury to an animal; or

(b) Cruelly causes the death of an animal.

(2) Any practice of good animal husbandry is not a violation of this section.

(3) Animal abuse in the first degree is a Class A misdemeanor.

(4) Notwithstanding subsection (3) of this section, animal abuse in the first degree is a Class C felony if:

(a) The person committing the animal abuse has previously been convicted of one or more of the following offenses:

(A) Any offense under [ORS 163.160](#), [163.165](#), [163.175](#), [163.185](#) or [163.187](#) or the equivalent laws of another jurisdiction, if the offense involved domestic violence as defined in [ORS 135.230](#) or the offense was committed against a minor child; or

(B) Any offense under this section or [ORS 167.322](#), or the equivalent laws of another jurisdiction; or

(b) The person knowingly commits the animal abuse in the immediate presence of a minor child. For purposes of this paragraph, a minor child is in the immediate presence of animal abuse if the abuse is seen or directly perceived in any other manner by the minor child.

(5) When animal abuse in the first degree is a felony, the Oregon Criminal Justice Commission shall classify the offense as crime category 6 of the sentencing guidelines grid.

### ***OR ST § 167.325 (2014). Animal neglect in the second degree***

(1) A person commits the crime of animal neglect in the second degree if, except as otherwise authorized by law, the person intentionally, knowingly, recklessly or with criminal negligence:

(a) Fails to provide minimum care for an animal in such person's custody or control; or

(b) Tethers a domestic animal in the person's custody or control and the tethering results in physical injury to the domestic animal.

(2) Animal neglect in the second degree is a Class B misdemeanor.

(3) Notwithstanding subsection (2) of this section, animal neglect in the second degree is a Class C felony if:

(a) The person committing the offense has previously been convicted of two or more offenses under this section, [ORS 167.330](#) or the equivalent laws of another jurisdiction;

(b) The offense was part of a criminal episode involving 11 or more animals; or

(c) The person knowingly commits the offense in the immediate presence of a minor child and the person has one or more previous convictions for an offense involving domestic violence as defined in [ORS 135.230](#). For purposes of this paragraph, a minor child is in the immediate presence of animal neglect if the neglect is seen or directly perceived in any other manner by the minor child.

(4) The Oregon Criminal Justice Commission shall classify animal neglect in the second degree under subsection (3) of this section:

(a) As crime category 6 if 11 to 40 animals were the subject of the neglect.

(b) As crime category 7 if more than 40 animals were the subject of the neglect or if the offense is a felony because of circumstances described in subsection (3)(a) or (c) of this section.

***OR ST § 167.330 (2014). Animal neglect in the first degree***

(1) A person commits the crime of animal neglect in the first degree if, except as otherwise authorized by law, the person intentionally, knowingly, recklessly or with criminal negligence:

(a) Fails to provide minimum care for an animal in the person's custody or control and the failure to provide care results in serious physical injury or death to the animal; or

(b) Tethers a domestic animal in the person's custody or control and the tethering results in serious physical injury or death to the domestic animal.

(2) Animal neglect in the first degree is a Class A misdemeanor.

(3) Notwithstanding subsection (2) of this section, animal neglect in the first degree is a Class C felony if:

(a) The person committing the offense has previously been convicted of one or more offenses under this section, [ORS 167.325](#) or the equivalent laws of another jurisdiction;

(b) The offense was part of a criminal episode involving 10 or more animals; or

(c) The person knowingly commits the offense in the immediate presence of a minor child. For purposes of this paragraph, a minor child is in the immediate presence of animal neglect if the neglect is seen or directly perceived in any other manner by the minor child.

(4) The Oregon Criminal Justice Commission shall classify animal neglect in the first degree under subsection (3) of this section:

(a) As crime category 6 if 10 to 40 animals were the subject of the neglect.

(b) As crime category 7 if more than 40 animals were the subject of the neglect or if the offense is a felony because of circumstances described in subsection (3)(a) or (c) of this section.

## **Virginia**

### ***Va. Code Ann. § 3.2-6571 (2014). Animal fighting; penalty***

A. No person shall knowingly:

1. Promote, prepare for, engage in, or be employed in, the fighting of animals for amusement, sport or gain;

2. Attend an exhibition of the fighting of animals;

3. Authorize or allow any person to undertake any act described in this section on any premises under his charge or control; or

4. Aid or abet any such acts.

Except as provided in subsection B, any person who violates any provision of this subsection is guilty of a Class 1 misdemeanor.

B. Any person who violates any provision of subsection A in combination with one or more of the following is guilty of a Class 6 felony:

1. When a dog is one of the animals;

2. When any device or substance intended to enhance an animal's ability to fight or to inflict injury upon another animal is used, or possessed with intent to use it for such purpose;

3. When money or anything of value is wagered on the result of such fighting;

4. When money or anything of value is paid or received for the admission of a person to a place for animal fighting;

5. When any animal is possessed, owned, trained, transported, or sold with the intent that the animal engage in an exhibition of fighting with another animal; or

6. When he permits or causes a minor to (i) attend an exhibition of the fighting of any animals or (ii) undertake or be involved in any act described in this subsection.

C. 1. Any animal control officer, as defined in [§ 3.2-6500](#), shall confiscate any animal that he determines has been, is, or is intended to be used in animal fighting and any equipment used in training such animal or used in animal fighting.

2. Upon confiscation of an animal, the animal control officer shall petition the appropriate court for a hearing for a determination of whether the animal has been, is, or is intended to be used in animal fighting. The hearing shall be not more than 10 business days from the date of the confiscation of the animal. If the court finds that the animal has not been used, is not used and is not intended to be used in animal fighting, it shall order the animal released to its owner. However, if the court finds probable cause to believe that the animal has been, is, or is intended to be used in animal fighting, the court shall order the animal forfeited to the locality unless the owner posts bond in surety with the locality in an amount sufficient to compensate the locality for its cost of caring for the animal for a period of nine months. He shall post additional bond for each successive nine-month period until a final determination by the trial court on any criminal charges brought pursuant to subsections A or B.

3. Upon a final determination of guilt by the trial court on criminal charges brought pursuant to subsections A or B, the court shall order that the animal be forfeited to the locality. Upon a final determination of not guilty by the trial court on the underlying criminal charges, a confiscated animal shall be returned to its owner and any bond shall be refunded to him.

D. Any person convicted of violating any provision of subsection A or B shall be prohibited by the court from possession or ownership of companion animals or cocks.

E. In addition to fines and costs, the court shall order any person who is convicted of a violation of this section to pay all reasonable costs incurred in housing, caring for, or euthanizing any confiscated animal. If the court finds that the actual costs are reasonable, it may order payment of actual costs.

F. The provisions of this section shall not apply to any law-enforcement officer in the performance of his duties. This section shall not prohibit (i) authorized wildlife management activities or hunting, fishing, or trapping authorized under any title of the Code of Virginia or regulations promulgated thereto or (ii) farming activities authorized under Title 3.2 of the Code of Virginia or regulations promulgated thereto.

## **Washington**

### ***Wash. Rev. Code Ann. § 16.52.205***

(1) A person is guilty of animal cruelty in the first degree when, except as authorized in law, he or she intentionally (a) inflicts substantial pain on, (b) causes physical injury to, or (c) kills an

animal by a means causing undue suffering, or forces a minor to inflict unnecessary pain, injury, or death on an animal.

(2) A person is guilty of animal cruelty in the first degree when, except as authorized by law, he or she, with criminal negligence, starves, dehydrates, or suffocates an animal and as a result causes: (a) Substantial and unjustifiable physical pain that extends for a period sufficient to cause considerable suffering; or (b) death.

(3) A person is guilty of animal cruelty in the first degree when he or she:

(a) Knowingly engages in any sexual conduct or sexual contact with an animal;

(b) Knowingly causes, aids, or abets another person to engage in any sexual conduct or sexual contact with an animal;

(c) Knowingly permits any sexual conduct or sexual contact with an animal to be conducted on any premises under his or her charge or control;

(d) Knowingly engages in, organizes, promotes, conducts, advertises, aids, abets, participates in as an observer, or performs any service in the furtherance of an act involving any sexual conduct or sexual contact with an animal for a commercial or recreational purpose; or

(e) Knowingly photographs or films, for purposes of sexual gratification, a person engaged in a sexual act or sexual contact with an animal.

(4) Animal cruelty in the first degree is a class C felony.

(5) In addition to the penalty imposed in subsection (4) of this section, the court may order that the convicted person do any of the following:

(a) Not harbor or own animals or reside in any household where animals are present;

(b) Participate in appropriate counseling at the defendant's expense;

(c) Reimburse the animal shelter or humane society for any reasonable costs incurred for the care and maintenance of any animals taken to the animal shelter or humane society as a result of conduct proscribed in subsection (3) of this section.

(6) Nothing in this section may be considered to prohibit accepted animal husbandry practices or accepted veterinary medical practices by a licensed veterinarian or certified veterinary technician.

(7) If the court has reasonable grounds to believe that a violation of this section has occurred, the court may order the seizure of all animals involved in the alleged violation as a condition of bond of a person charged with a violation.

(8) For purposes of this section:

(a) “Animal” means every creature, either alive or dead, other than a human being.

(b) “Sexual conduct” means any touching or fondling by a person, either directly or through clothing, of the sex organs or anus of an animal or any transfer or transmission of semen by the person upon any part of the animal, for the purpose of sexual gratification or arousal of the person.

(c) “Sexual contact” means any contact, however slight, between the mouth, sex organ, or anus of a person and the sex organ or anus of an animal, or any intrusion, however slight, of any part of the body of the person into the sex organ or anus of an animal, or any intrusion of the sex organ or anus of the person into the mouth of the animal, for the purpose of sexual gratification or arousal of the person.

(d) “Photographs” or “films” means the making of a photograph, motion picture film, videotape, digital image, or any other recording, sale, or transmission of the image.

## **Federal**

### ***7 U.S.C.S. § 2156 (2014). Animal fighting venture prohibition***

(a) Sponsoring or exhibiting an animal in, attending, or causing an individual who has not attained the age of 16 to attend, an animal fighting venture

(1) Sponsoring or exhibiting

Except as provided in paragraph (3), it shall be unlawful for any person to knowingly sponsor or exhibit an animal in an animal fighting venture.

(2) Attending or causing an individual who has not attained the age of 16 to attend

It shall be unlawful for any person to--

(A) knowingly attend an animal fighting venture; or

(B) knowingly cause an individual who has not attained the age of 16 to attend an animal fighting venture.

(3) Special rule for certain State

With respect to fighting ventures involving live birds in a State where it would not be in violation of the law, it shall be unlawful under this subsection for a person to sponsor or exhibit a bird in the fighting venture only if the person knew that any bird in the fighting venture was knowingly bought, sold, delivered, transported, or received in interstate or foreign commerce for the purpose of participation in the fighting venture.

(b) Buying, selling, delivering, possessing, training, or transporting animals for participation in animal fighting venture

It shall be unlawful for any person to knowingly sell, buy, possess, train, transport, deliver, or receive any animal for purposes of having the animal participate in an animal fighting venture.

(c) Use of Postal Service or other interstate instrumentality for promoting or furthering animal fighting venture

It shall be unlawful for any person to knowingly use the mail service of the United States Postal Service or any instrumentality of interstate commerce for commercial speech for purposes of advertising an animal, or an instrument described in subsection (e), for use in an animal fighting venture, promoting or in any other manner furthering an animal fighting venture except as performed outside the limits of the States of the United States.

(d) Violation of State law

Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (c) of this section, the activities prohibited by such subsection shall be unlawful with respect to fighting ventures involving live birds only if the fight is to take place in a State where it would be in violation of the laws thereof.

(e) Buying, selling, delivering, or transporting sharp instruments for use in animal fighting venture

It shall be unlawful for any person to knowingly sell, buy, transport, or deliver in interstate or foreign commerce a knife, a gaff, or any other sharp instrument attached, or designed or intended to be attached, to the leg of a bird for use in an animal fighting venture.

(f) Investigation of violations by Secretary; assistance by other Federal agencies; issuance of search warrant; forfeiture; costs recoverable in forfeiture or civil action

The Secretary or any other person authorized by him shall make such investigations as the Secretary deems necessary to determine whether any person has violated or is violating any provision of this section, and the Secretary may obtain the assistance of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of the Treasury, or other law enforcement agencies of the United States, and State and local governmental agencies, in the conduct of such investigations, under cooperative agreements with such agencies. A warrant to search for and seize any animal which there is probable cause to believe was involved in any violation of this section may be issued by any judge of the United States or of a State court of record or by a United States magistrate judge within the district wherein the animal sought is located. Any United States marshal or any person authorized under this section to conduct investigations may apply for and execute any such warrant, and any animal seized under such a warrant shall be held by the United States marshal or other authorized person pending disposition thereof by the court in accordance with this subsection. Necessary care including veterinary treatment shall be provided while the animals are so held in custody. Any animal involved in any violation of this section shall be liable to be

proceeded against and forfeited to the United States at any time on complaint filed in any United States district court or other court of the United States for any jurisdiction in which the animal is found and upon a judgment of forfeiture shall be disposed of by sale for lawful purposes or by other humane means, as the court may direct. Costs incurred for care of animals seized and forfeited under this section shall be recoverable from the owner of the animals (1) if he appears in such forfeiture proceeding, or (2) in a separate civil action brought in the jurisdiction in which the owner is found, resides, or transacts business.

(g) Definitions

In this section--

(1) the term “animal fighting venture” means any event, in or affecting interstate or foreign commerce, that involves a fight conducted or to be conducted between at least 2 animals for purposes of sport, wagering, or entertainment, except that the term “animal fighting venture” shall not be deemed to include any activity the primary purpose of which involves the use of one or more animals in hunting another animal;

(2) the term “instrumentality of interstate commerce” means any written, wire, radio, television or other form of communication in, or using a facility of, interstate commerce;

(3) the term “State” means any State of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and any territory or possession of the United States;

(4) the term “animal” means any live bird, or any live mammal, except man.

(h) Relationship to other provisions

The conduct by any person of any activity prohibited by this section shall not render such person subject to the other sections of this chapter as a dealer, exhibitor, or otherwise.

(i) Conflict with State law

(1) In general

The provisions of this chapter shall not supersede or otherwise invalidate any such State, local, or municipal legislation or ordinance relating to animal fighting ventures except in case of a direct and irreconcilable conflict between any requirements thereunder and this chapter or any rule, regulation, or standard hereunder.

(2) Omitted

(j) Criminal penalties

The criminal penalties for violations of subsection (a), (b), (c), or (e) are provided in [section 49 of Title 18](#).

## **Puerto Rico**

### ***P.R. Laws Ann. tit. 5, 1668 (2011). Abuse.***

(a) A person is guilty of the crime of animal abuse if the person willfully, knowingly, carelessly or with criminal negligence inflicts any bodily injury or suffering on the animal.

(b) Animal abuse is considered to be a fourth-degree felony that entails the imposition of punishment by imprisonment ranging from six (6) months and one (1) day to three (3) years.

(1) If upon conviction, the accused qualifies and avails him/herself of serving time on probation or any alternative method other than jail imprisonment, the punishment shall entail a mandatory fine ranging from one thousand [dollars] (\$1,000) to three thousand dollars (\$3,000).

(c) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (b) of this section, animal abuse constitutes a third-degree felony that entails the imposition of punishment by imprisonment ranging from three (3) years and one (1) day to eight (8) years if:

(1) The person who is committing the crime of animal abuse has been previously convicted of one or more offenses relative to:

(A) Any law concerning animal protection in Puerto Rico or equivalent laws or regulations from any other jurisdiction; or

(B) any statute of Puerto Rico concerning domestic violence, child abuse or elderly abuse, or equivalent laws from another jurisdiction, or

(C) the person knowingly abuses an animal in the immediate presence of a minor. For the purposes of this paragraph, a minor is in the immediate presence of an instance of animal abuse if such an instance is seen or directly perceived in any manner by the minor.

(i) If upon conviction, the accused qualifies and avails him/herself of serving time on probation or of any alternative method other than jail imprisonment, the punishment shall entail a mandatory fine ranging from three thousand [dollars] (\$3,000) to ten thousand dollars (\$10,000).

### ***P.R. Laws Ann. tit. 5, 1669 (2011). Third-degree abuse.***

(a) A person shall be guilty of the crime of animal abuse in its third-degree felony modality if a person willfully, knowingly, carelessly or with criminal negligence:

(1) Inflicts a severe bodily injury, or

(2) inflicts death on an animal.

(b) This crime entails punishment by imprisonment ranging from three (3) years and one (1) day to eight (8) years.

(1) If upon conviction, the accused qualifies and avails him/herself of serving time on probation or of any alternative method other than jail imprisonment, the punishment shall entail a mandatory fine ranging from three thousand [dollars] (\$3,000) to ten thousand dollars (\$10,000).

(c) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, animal abuse shall be typified as a second-degree felony that entails the imposition of punishment by imprisonment ranging from eight (8) years and one (1) day to fifteen (15) years if:

(1) The person committing the crime of animal abuse has been previously convicted of one or more offenses relative to:

(A) Any law concerning animal protection in Puerto Rico or equivalent laws or regulations from another jurisdiction; or

(B) any statute of Puerto Rico concerning domestic violence, child abuse or elderly abuse, or equivalent laws from another jurisdiction, or

(C) the person knowingly abuses an animal in the immediate presence of a minor. For purposes of this paragraph, a minor is in the immediate presence of an instance of animal abuse if such an instance is seen or directly perceived in any manner by the minor.

(i) If upon conviction, the accused qualifies and avails him/herself of serving time on probation or of any alternative method other than jail imprisonment, the punishment shall entail a mandatory fine ranging from ten thousand [dollars] (\$10,000) to fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000).

***P.R. Laws Ann. tit. 5, 1670 (2011). Aggravated abuse.***

(a) A person shall be guilty of the crime of aggravated animal abuse if the person willfully or knowingly:

(1) Tortures an animal, or

(2) kills an animal under circumstances that show there was malice aforethought or a gross disregard for life.

(b) Aggravated animal abuse is typified as a second-degree felony that entails punishment by imprisonment for a term of not less than eight (8) years and one (1) day and not more than fifteen (15) years.

(1) If upon conviction, the accused qualifies and avails him/herself of serving time on probation or of any alternative method other than jail imprisonment, the punishment shall entail a mandatory fine ranging from ten thousand [dollars] (\$10,000) to twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000).

(c) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (b) of this section, aggravated animal abuse shall be typified as a second-degree felony without the right to alternate benefits other than jail imprisonment if:

(1) The person committing the crime of animal abuse has been previously convicted of one or more offenses relative to:

(A) Any law concerning animal protection in Puerto Rico or equivalent laws or regulations of another jurisdiction; or

(B) any statute of Puerto Rico concerning domestic violence, child abuse or elderly abuse, or equivalent laws from another jurisdiction, or

(C) the person knowingly abuses an animal in the immediate presence of a minor. For purposes of this paragraph, a minor shall be in the immediate presence of an instance of animal abuse if such an instance is seen or directly perceived in any manner by the minor.