

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 29, 2024

RE: H.B. No. 1980
H.D. 1

Honorable Scott K. Saiki
Speaker, House of Representatives
Thirty-Second State Legislature
Regular Session of 2024
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs, to which was referred H.B. No. 1980 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO ANIMAL CRUELTY,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to establish penalties related to cruelty to animals by fighting birds.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Law Enforcement; Honolulu Police Department; Office of the Prosecuting Attorney of the County of Kaua'i; Hina's Legacy Rescue Foundation; Hawaiian Humane Society; Animal Welfare Institute; Animal Interfaith Alliance of Britain; Animal Rights Hawai'i; The Humane Society of the United States; Domestic Violence Hurts Animals and People; Hawaii High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area; Big Island Reef Keepers Hui; and numerous individuals. Your Committee received testimony in opposition to this measure from the Office of the Public Defender and one individual. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of the Attorney General.

Your Committee finds that illegal animal fighting is directly associated with other criminal activities such as illegal gambling, illegal firearms possession, illegal drug distribution, endangerment of minors, and human violence. Your Committee



further finds that psychologists and criminologists have long determined that children exposed to human or animal violence, or who engage in animal cruelty, are more likely to escalate to violence against humans, threatening the overall community and public safety. This measure strengthens existing laws relating to animal cruelty by establishing the criminal offenses of cruelty to animals by fighting birds in the first and second degree.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Clarifying the definition of "fight between birds";
- (2) Defining "property" as it relates to forfeiture;
- (3) Providing that if there is any conflict between the offense of cruelty to animal by fighting birds in the first degree and the offense of cruelty to animals in the second degree, then the offense of cruelty to animal by fighting birds in the first degree shall apply;
- (4) Changing the effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and
- (5) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 1980, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 1980, H.D. 1, and be placed on the calendar for Third Reading.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Judiciary &
Hawaiian Affairs,



DAVID A. TARNAS, Chair



