



# HOUSE BILL 544: Revise Animal Fighting Laws.

2021-2022 General Assembly

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<b>Committee:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	May 11, 2021
<b>Introduced by:</b>	Reps. C. Smith, McNeill, Howard, Carter	<b>Prepared by:</b>	Hillary Woodard Staff Attorney
<b>Analysis of:</b>	Second Edition		

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**OVERVIEW:** *House Bill 544 would criminalize causing someone under the age of eighteen years of age to be present at an exhibition featuring animal fighting.*

## CURRENT LAW AND BILL ANALYSIS:

**Section 1** amends G.S. 14-362, which provides a Class I felony offense for participating in an exhibition featuring cockfighting, to create an additional offense for causing a person under 18 years of age to be present at an exhibition.

**Section 2** amends G.S. 14-362.1, which provides a Class 2 misdemeanor offense for participating in an exhibition featuring the fighting or baiting of an animal other than a cock or a dog. The PCS creates an additional offense for causing a person under 18 years of age to be present at an exhibition.

**Section 3** amends G.S. 14-362.2 which provides that it is a Class H felony for participating in the baiting or fighting of a dog, to create an additional offense for causing a person under 18 years of age to be present at an exhibition.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** This act becomes effective December 1, 2021 and applies to offenses committed on or after that date.

**BACKGROUND:** The punishment ranges for the listed offenses are as follows:

Class H felony – punishable by an absolute minimum of 3 months community punishment and an absolute maximum of 39 months active punishment, depending on prior record level.

Class I felony – punishable by an absolute minimum of 3 months community punishment and an absolute maximum of 25 months active punishment, depending on prior record level.

Class 2 misdemeanor – punishable by an absolute minimum of one day community punishment and an absolute maximum of 60 days active punishment, depending on prior record level.

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