



POLICY TITLE: ANIMAL FIGHTING

Reviewed by: AWMG

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Approved by: Management Team

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Approved by: Board of Directors

Date: October 18, 2016

The Animal Rescue League of Boston believes that “blood sports” glorify violence for the sake of monetary gain, entertainment, or other reasons. These activities cause suffering, maiming, and death to the animals forced to participate and have negative societal consequences.

Animal fighting is a particularly insidious and sadistic form of animal cruelty, having literally been in existence for centuries. As with many animal issues, the problems presented by this type of human-animal interaction require a multi-disciplinary response and constant vigilance to mitigate the direct and indirect adverse consequences of animal fighting.

Animals suffer and die as a direct result of the fighting activities. Additionally, animals suffer and die as a result of poor housing, inadequate veterinary care, and inadequate food and shelter provided by the owners and operators of such enterprises. Those who participate in or view animal fighting are attracted by the promise of money, the easy exchange of guns and drugs, and become desensitized to the suffering that the animals endure.

Animals that manage to survive may be maimed, physically and otherwise, for the rest of their lives. Finding permanent or foster homes presents its own set of challenges, particularly if animal cruelty charges relating to the animals are pending.

Animals involved in animal fighting may not necessarily be viewed as or treated as victims of criminal activity but are portrayed by the media as representatives of breeds or species which – despite evidence to the contrary – are inherently dangerous.

Therefore, the Animal Rescue League will:

1. Oppose any acts whereby humans own, possess, keep, train, sell, loan, transfer and breed any animal with the intent that the animal and/or its offspring engage in, and be exhibited for, animal fighting including any event that sets a person against an animal;
2. Support investigations of suspected animal fighting;
3. Assist in the prosecution of persons charged with crimes of, and related to, animal fighting;

4. Advocate for stronger penalties and sentences for those convicted of animal fighting on both the state and federal level;
5. Seek effective forfeiture provisions to allow animals to be placed in appropriate homes;
6. Encourage reporting of such activity by veterinarians and by the public;
7. Educate the public; and
8. Counter erroneous media and public perception that, without exception, the animals used in fighting ventures are inherently and permanently dangerous, enjoy fighting, and that the only recourse is euthanasia.