

Bill to ban cockfighting in NM passes House, goes to Governor for signature

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Louisiana to Be Only State in U.S. That Allows Cockfighting

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. - New Mexico's controversial bill to ban cockfighting, which has received national media attention, passed the New Mexico House of Representatives on Thursday with a 49 to 20 vote. This was the final legislative hurdle for the bill sponsored by Senator Mary Jane Garcia (D-Dona Ana County, NM). After nearly 20 years of attempts to pass the state Legislature, the bill will become law once signed by the governor. Governor Bill Richardson, who formed a presidential exploratory committee, has stated publicly that he supports a ban on cockfighting and will actively try to make it law. Once the governor signs the bill, Louisiana would be the only remaining state in the country to allow cockfighting.

"New Mexico's state senators and representatives voted in accordance with the wishes of the vast majority of New Mexicans who support a ban on cockfighting," said Lisa Jennings, executive director of Animal Protection Voters. "Cockfighting is clearly cruelty to animals and it will be a crime once the bill is signed by the governor. New Mexico is making it clear that it will not tolerate intentionally maiming and killing animals for fun and gambling entertainment."

The bill states that cockfighting is illegal in New Mexico and the law will take effect on July 1, 2007. A person violating the law is guilty of a petty-misdemeanor on the first offense, a misdemeanor on the second offense, and a fourth-degree felony on the third and subsequent offenses.

Cockfighting involves arming two roosters with razor-sharp knives or ice pick-like gaffs and pitting them against each other in a fight to the death. The roosters are often given drugs to enhance their aggression. Cockfights almost always involve some form of illegal gambling.

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