



49651 Shenandoah Circle
Canton, MI 48187

March 18, 2019

Representative Graham Filler
Chair, Judiciary Committee
Michigan House of Representatives

Via email: Melissa Weipert, Committee Clerk, mweipert@house.mi.gov

Re: Support of HB 4102, House Judiciary Committee Meeting, March 19, 2019

Dear Rep. Filler and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide information to the committee. Attorneys for Animals, Inc. (AFA) is a Michigan non-profit and 501(c)(3) organization of legal professionals and animal advocates. The organization's Board of Directors voted to **support HB 4102** (and had supported HB 6255 in the last session).

This bill is part of a package to revise the Michigan Penal Code to include references to cryptocurrency. We commend Rep. Marino for realizing the need to update the animal fighting statute to acknowledge that cryptocurrency is a reality in these crimes and thank him for re-introducing this bill.

Animal fighting, while a crime in all 50 states, has been on the rebound since the 1990s, likely because of the internet. Animal fighters are sophisticated, and often are associated with other forms of criminal activity, including illegal gambling. Federal agencies have prosecuted cases in which drug cartels were running narcotics through cockfighting and dogfighting operations.ⁱ These criminals have been described as "violent and highly secretive". The enterprises are difficult for law enforcement to infiltrate, and an investigation challenges the resources of those agencies which respond to the crime.ⁱⁱ

This bill will update Michigan law to respond to these challenges and will allow prosecutors to keep up with the changing landscape of animal fighting criminals. We urge the Committee to report this bill with a recommendation.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Beatrice M. Friedlander".

Beatrice M. Friedlander, JD
President

ⁱ <https://www.humanesociety.org/resources/animal-cruelty-facts-and-stats>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.aspc.org/animal-cruelty/dogfighting/closer-look-dogfighting>