

Prevent Spreading Avian Diseases by Closing Loopholes

This amendment takes necessary steps to prevent the spread of avian disease while combating the international cockfighting industry by shutting down the interstate and overseas transportation of fighting birds on airlines.

The rampant spread of avian flu takes a toll on domestic agricultural avian populations and our economy. One risk factor for spreading this disease are the roosters bred for cockfighting, which is illegal in all states ([7 U.S.C. 2156](#)). Cockfighting activities, including the possession and transport of animals for the purpose of fighting, are also a federal crime in the United States.

Despite these prohibitions, thousands of roosters in the U.S. are exported on airlines to cockfighters in American territories and foreign countries annually. Airlines are unwittingly assisting cockfighters by transporting birds and spreading disease, even though roosters play no role in the production of meat or eggs. This legislation will help airlines navigate these issues.

Cockfighting spreads avian disease

- Cockfighters who breed roosters for fighting maintain hundreds, and often thousands, of birds outside with no USDA oversight. This creates an ideal environment for the spread of avian disease.
- Gamefowl yards are common in many states in the U.S. and the birds are sold for hundreds or thousands of dollars each.
- The export of roosters creates a significant profit motive for U.S. cockfighters who breed birds with no oversight or consideration of disease risk.
- Highly pathogenic avian influenza has caused bird flu outbreaks in [47 states](#) affecting more than 58 million commercial poultry and backyard flocks from January 2022-February 2023.
- The deadly H5N1 avian flu strain has been found in wild birds and in mammals. This has created a concern for mammal-to-mammal transmission that could also be fatal for humans.

Closing the loopholes on cruelty

The U.S. Congress has already decided that cockfighting goes against American values and this legislation seeks to strengthen that commitment by addressing the export of roosters for fighting. The people shipping them often falsify the paperwork accompanying these roosters, so their crimes go undetected.

- This bill gives FAA the authority to ban the shipping of live adult roosters to prevent further shipments of these birds for fighting.
- Roosters have no purpose for the poultry industry and are exported on airlines almost exclusively for cockfighting.
- Cockfighting is animal abuse that breeds illegal activity, including illegal drug dealing and human trafficking, and is often affiliated with dangerous criminal groups.

AT A GLANCE



THE BILL:

- **Designates live adult roosters as hazardous materials for purpose of air transportation;**
- **Prohibits interstate and foreign air transport of roosters; and**
- **Allows exceptions for shipments individually authorized by special permit.**

Proposed Amendment Language Rep. Carbajal (D-CA)

Sec. X. TRANSPORT OF LIVE ROOSTERS

Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall issue final regulations modifying section 172 of Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, so as to (1) designate live adult roosters as hazardous materials for purpose of air transportation and, in order to prevent the spread of avian influenza, (2) prohibit interstate and foreign air transport pursuant to Title 49, Section 5103, except for shipments individually authorized by special permit issued under Title 49, Section 5117.

