



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Kenneth P. LaValle

# **LaValle Awarded Humane Society of The United States Humane Legislator Award**

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April 18, 2012



New York State Senator Kenneth P. LaValle (R,C,I-Port Jefferson) was awarded the Humane Society of The United States Humane State Legislator Award today for his commitment to animal friendly legislation in New York State.

Last year, LaValle sponsored and the Governor signed into law, legislation that closed a major loophole in New York's animal fighting laws that allowed some dogfighters and cockfighters to escape punishment by masquerading as spectators.

"Causing animals to fight and betting on the outcome is inhumane," said Senator LaValle. "This new law provides law enforcement and prosecutors with a stronger tool with which to combat these terrible acts."

While dogfighting and cockfighting are felonies in New York, attending an animal fight was only a violation. The new law upgrades the penalty for the spectators who fuel the economy of animal fighting with their admission fees and wagers to a more meaningful misdemeanor. It also stops dogfighters from escaping prosecution by blending into the crowd and pretending to be spectators when raided. Under the new law, knowingly attending animal fights is punishable by up to three months in jail and a \$500 fine. A second offense carries a penalty of up to a year in jail and a \$1,000 fine.