



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

March 14, 2013

Chair Witt and Committee Members

House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

Salem, Oregon

RE: HB 2783 (INCLUDING -1 AMENDMENT)

Dear Chair Witt and Committee Members:

On behalf of The Humane Society of the United States, the nation's largest animal protection organization, I submit this testimony in strong support of HB 2783, the bill to restrict the tethering and chaining of dogs, including the -1 Amendment. The Humane Society of the United States urges a YES vote on HB 2783, including the -1 Amendment, for the following reasons:

1. Tethering and Chaining is Unsafe for Dogs, and the Community:

A dog on a chain is lonely and isolated, and that causes a host of behavioral problems. The continuous chaining or tethering of a dog is a key contributor to poor socialization, as dogs subjected to excessive chaining tend to bark excessively and often suffer great psychological damage which can make them anxious and aggressive. The Centers for Disease Control and the American Veterinary Medical Association warn that chained dogs are about eight times more likely to bite. Chained dogs are more likely to escape, run at large, and pose a threat to themselves and the public. Further, The USDA considers tethering as a means for confinement to be inhumane and an inadequate method of confinement. Chains catch on obstacles, which can be dangerous, and can cause dogs to be unable to reach their food, water, or shelter. By imposing modest restrictions, HB 2783 will protect dogs from the risk of injury and strangulation.

2. HB 2783 Sets Limits on Chaining and Tethering of Dogs and Provides for Violations or Penalties When Dogs are Injured or Killed by Tethering:

If a dog is simply tied to a stationary object, HB 2783 provides that the animal can only be tethered for no more than 10 hours in a 24 hour period, and if the animal is on a zip line, no more than 15 hours in a 24 hour period. Violation of this provision would be a Class B Violation. When the person is physically present with the animal, there is no time restriction. Unlawful tethering that results in physical injury is a Class B Misdemeanor, and the penalty is increased to a Class A Misdemeanor if it results in serious injury or death of the animal.

3. HB 2783 Improves Minimum Care Standards for Dogs:

Current standards for shelter required for dogs are vague and difficult for animal control and law enforcement officers to interpret and enforce. HB 2783 provides a more specific and consistent

framework of what is allowed, and will require that dogs are provided with shelter that is enclosed and contains adequate bedding materials.

4. HB 2783 Gives Officers a Valuable Tool for Enforcement:

Restricting the tethering of dogs and upgrading care standards will give animal control and law enforcement officers an important opportunity to educate dog owners on proper care, and provide them with more certain, consistent, and enforceable minimum care standards. Tethering would be considered a violation (giving law enforcement a tool to require the family to make changes and corrections), unless certain requirements are met. In short, this new law would be used as a deterrent, a mechanism and tool to elevate the standard of care for those dogs living outside most hours of the day.

A restriction on chaining or tethering will reduce the high volume of calls to animal control and the law enforcement regarding the concerns of chained dogs, and complaints from neighbors over the constant barking, running at large, and the other undesirable behaviors of tethered dogs. They will also reduce the threat to public safety, since chained dogs are far more likely to be aggressive.

5. HB 2783 Does Not Apply To Horses and Livestock:

This bill only applies to “domestic animals,” which is defined by statute to NOT include equines and livestock.

6. HB 2783 Provides for Key Exemptions:

Tethering for specific purposes and certain entities are exempt. HB 2783 allows unrestricted tethering when it is required by a camping or recreational area, for licensed activities such as hunting, and for dogs kept for herding and protecting livestock, and dogsledding.

7. The -1 Amendment to HB 2783 Was Composed by Key Stakeholders:

The language in the -1 Amendments submitted to the Committee are the product of extensive deliberations by a workgroup made up of key stakeholders, including animal control officers, humane societies, and dog advocacy groups. The group discussed enforceability and generally worked together to create a bill that will be effective in protecting dogs and providing law enforcement with a much-needed tool. All of the members of the group are unanimous in their support for the -1 Amendments. **HB 2783 IS SUPPORTED BY A BROAD COALITION OF GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS THAT INCLUDES THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES, THE OREGON HUMANE SOCIETY, THE OREGON ANIMAL CONTROL COUNCIL, THE OREGON VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (OVMA), AND FENCES FOR FIDO.**

Please vote YES on HB 2783, including the -1 Amendment.

Thank you.

Scott Beckstead
Senior Oregon Director
The Humane Society of the United States.