

**House Bill 2783
Position: Support**

March 26, 2013

**Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee
Chair, Rep. Brad Witt / Vice Chair, Rep. Sal Esquivel**

Dear Chair Witt, Vice Chair Esquivel and Committee Members:

I am here this morning on behalf of the Oregon Veterinary Medical Association and in support of House Bill 2783.

While the bill references domestic animals, what we principally are talking about is “Man’s – and Woman’s – best friend, dogs. For those of us in the veterinary profession, the physical and social well-being of dogs is vitally important. It lends to a happier dog, a more sociable animal, and with good interaction with us as caretakers, it enhances that special connection we have with animals and the connection they share with us.

A dog that is chained up or on a short tether that severely limits its ability to move around or becomes entangled in a manner that poses a risk to its health does not lead a very good life. Sadly, many dogs that live like this often show signs of neglect – they don’t receive decent nutrition, are generally ignored, and often are not afforded reasonable and basic medical care.

Dogs are physical beings and need good freedom of movement, and they also deserve decent housing – a place that when they are outside isn’t sloped with mud during the winter, shelter to protect them from a hard-driving rain or a glaring sun, and adequate bedding for their comfort.

The proposed amendments as discussed earlier provide reasonable definitions to Oregon's standards of care for animals. They meet a dog's needs and give our animal control and local law enforcement agencies some better guidelines to work with and better tools for educating those who are intentionally or unintentionally neglecting their responsibilities to these animals.

I would like to leave you with this. I have a Golden Retriever – his name is Dylan – and he's approaching his 16th birthday in a little more than one month. Throughout his life he has had plenty of exercise and opportunity for play – both indoors and outdoors – and he's a happy, sociable dog. He's never been chained and has enjoyed good, dry shelter and comfortable bedding.

Contrast this with Colonel, one of the first dogs the Fences for Fido crew came across in Salem. The large white lab mix was 11 years old when Fences for Fido repaired the broken fence in his yard and unleashed him from the thick chain around his neck. Until that moment, this beautiful dog had spent 10 years of his life at the end of a chain – day in, day out, all day and all night, even when he became feeble and had difficulty walking. Colonel lived but for a short time following his release from the chain. He became seriously ill and had to be euthanized, but he did get to once again experience limited freedom from being tied up.

We can do better. Our laws can be better – not onerous and not impractical, but better. With the amendments before you, House Bill 2783 takes this into account. That is why the Oregon Veterinary Medical Association supports this legislation. And it is why we ask for your support as well.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Glenn M. Kolb
Executive Director