



Kevin O'Neill
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March 11, 2013

The Honorable Brad Witt, Chair
House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee
900 Court St NE, H-374
Salem, OR, 97301

RE: HB 2783 – Tethering – Support

Dear Representative Witt:

On behalf of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and our more than 2.5 million members and supporters nationwide, including more than 25,000 Oregon residents, I wish to register our strong support for HB 2783. HB 2783 would create the offense of unlawful tethering and further specifies that a person commits the crime of animal neglect in the first degree if tethering results in serious physical injury or death and commits animal neglect in the second degree if tethering results in physical injury.

Tethered animals are often the victims of abuse and neglect, suffering from sporadic feedings, empty water bowls, inadequate veterinary care and exposure to weather extremes. They are forced to eat, sleep, urinate and defecate in the same confined area, which goes against their natural instincts. Tethered animals also suffer neck injuries from collars that have become embedded into their skin – some even strangle to death when chains become entangled with other objects. Chained in place, they are also helpless to defend themselves against abusive people, stray animals and wild animals who may invade their space.

Tethering for short time periods, using appropriate equipment, in an animal-friendly environment (access to water, shelter and toys, for example) is generally harmless. However, tethered dogs run a high risk of becoming “stir crazy” due to the inability to release their energy and socialize with others. With dogs, boredom often leads to frustration, which, in turn, often leads to aggression. An additional contributor to aggression is that, given only a small area in which to dwell, tethered dogs are known to become irrationally protective of that area because it is essentially their whole world. Studies have shown that a chained or tethered dog is nearly three times more likely to bite than a dog who is not chained or tethered.

Tethering is a public safety issue as well as an animal welfare issue. Coupled with proper enforcement of animal cruelty and animal fighting laws, laws that prohibit tethering or chaining have been shown to reduce dog attacks, dog fighting and cruelty complaints. Many states have already passed tethering laws, recognizing that tethered dogs pose a higher risk of aggression.

For these reasons, the ASPCA strongly supports HB 2783 and its goal of enacting reasonable limits on tethering. If you have any questions about the ASPCA's position, please feel free to contact me at Kevin.oneill@aspca.org or 916.214.0476. Thank you for your time in considering our position.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kevin O'Neill".

Kevin O'Neill
Senior Legislative Director, Western Region

cc: The Honorable Sal Esquivel, Vice Chair
The Honorable Caddy McKeown, Vice Chair
The Honorable Brian Clem
The Honorable Wayne Krieger
The Honorable Jeff Reardon
The Honorable Jim Thompson
The Honorable Ben Unger
The Honorable Gail Whitsett