

Proper Dog Tethering Has Many Benefits

Statement for Inclusion in May 2nd Public Hearing on HB 2783

I am writing today to ask you to stop the myopic and ill-conceived anti-tethering legislation contained in HB 2783, and I would ask that you urge your colleagues to do the same.

Tethering an animal for their own safety, protection, husbandry and socialization has many benefits to the animal and owner. I have personal experience with those benefits over the last 12 years with my own dogs who live in a tethered dog yard. While my dogs are in fact sled dogs, what I have come to realize is that most of the benefits of tethering would accrue to any breed, working or not, where multiple dogs need to be managed, cared for and socialized properly.

Proper tethering is a wonderful tool. Benefits to the animal include:

a) The ability to have both a private space and a social space at the same time. Each dog has their own space where they can relax without having to defend their bone, their bowl, their house, etc. They also have a social space where they can interact with each of their neighbors, should they so choose.

b) Tethering gives me the ability to treat each dog as an individual. I can interact with each dog personally for feeding, grooming, training, husbandry chores, etc. It is far easier and safer to be able to focus on one dog at a time while trimming toenails, giving shots, feeding and grooming, for example, than trying to sort out multiple dogs at once in a kennel situation. Tethering enables me to give each dog the attention they need and deserve, and treat all members of my kennel with equal respect and care.

c) Tethering promotes proper socialization of each and every dog. This socialization benefit can't be overemphasized, whereas in a group penning or kennel situation the boisterous dogs get all the attention and the shy dogs become recluses and crawl further and further into their shells. I like working with shy dogs, and have had several over the years...tethering is the key to helping them become happy, balanced, and contributing individuals.

d) Tethering eliminates the possibility of fence-fighting, a common occurrence in kennel runs with fencing between the runs. Dogs are more relaxed because their environment is more controlled, and being pack animals they need to know that order is established upon which they can rely. When I turn my dogs loose to play, strictly under my personal supervision, they are relaxed with each other and entertain themselves by doing typical doggie behaviors – greeting, peeing, sniffing, etc. When I am done with my chores and it is time to go back onto their tethers I announce "Time to go to bed!" and literally all the dogs either run over to their spot to be hooked up, or they follow me around the yard like the Pied Piper, asking to be tethered at each spot we come to.

e) Tethering teaches the dog important life skills about untangling themselves. My dogs who live on tethers learn by doing, and when folks visit my dog yard they are amazed at the dogs bounding around, jumping and running, and yet never getting tangled. That's a learned skill which I recently realized I take for granted – I adopted a rescue border collie and had to teach her a "FEET" command to untangle

herself from the leash. Spending some time in the dog yard on a tether greatly enhanced her skills, and greatly reduced the frustration factor for both of us.

f) Tethering gives each dog the opportunity to exercise, maintain muscle tone, cardiovascular fitness, etc. throughout the year. Each dog has far more individual "exercisable" space than would be possible in a similar sized yard set up with kennel runs.

You'll note that ***none*** of these benefits have anything to do with sled dogs per se. I have come to realize through personal experience that tethering is a GREAT way to manage a group of dogs, no matter the breed or use. Companion pet dogs would gain all these same benefits of tethering that my dogs enjoy. So to restrict the benefits of tethering to only a small subset of dogs is one of the most ill-conceived portions of this proposed legislation. Golden Retriever, Pekinese, Portuguese Water Dogs, but to name a few pet dog breeds...all should have the opportunity to benefit from proper tethering.

Make no mistake...this legislation is a threat to ***all*** dog owners, whether or not you tether your dogs. It changes the playing field and moves the discussion onto the slippery slope of "What can you do with your dog?" When a specific healthy and beneficial activity is targeted with legislation, that should be a grave concern to all thoughtful, compassionate and engaged dog owners.

In closing, let me reiterate: Please oppose HB 2783 should it come up for a discussion/vote, and please urge all of your colleagues to do the same, for all of the reasons stated above.

I would be happy to address any further questions you might have on this issue.

Sincerely – Liz



Liz Parrish, Iditarod's Littlest Musher

Teaching people self-mastery and empowerment by living a "Canine-Inspired Life™!"

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p.s. Please see pictures of the happy and well-balanced tethered dogs in my dog yard in my blog post: [Proper Dog Tethering Has Many Benefits for All Dog Breeds](#). I have included a copy below in this PDF for your reference.

[Proper Dog Tethering Has Many Benefits](#)

April 30th, 2013 by LittlestMusher | Posted in [Be The Lead Dog](#) | [Edit](#) |

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Oregon is currently considering some myopic and ill-conceived legislation that would ban tethering of dogs with some small exceptions. I happen to qualify for one of those exceptions currently written into the bill (i.e. dogs used for dogsledding)...but that exception could just as easily be removed. HB 2783 is flying under most people's radar screen, and has several well-funded backers.



Springtime Dog Yard

The way this legislation is currently written saddens me, because it puts the benefits of proper tethering beyond the reach of most dogs and dog owners. Let me explain why that's a crime.

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Shasta Giving a Big Hug

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Shy Dog Gem

c) Tethering promotes proper socialization of each and every dog. This socialization benefit can't be overemphasized, whereas in a group penning or kennel situation the boisterous dogs get all the attention and the shy dogs become recluses and crawl further and further into their shells. I like working with shy dogs, and have had several over the years...tethering is the key to helping them become happy, balanced, and contributing individuals.

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Utah with His Bone

e) Tethering teaches the dog important life skills about untangling themselves. My dogs who live on tethers learn by doing, and when folks visit my dog yard they are amazed at the dogs bounding around, jumping and running, and yet never getting tangled. That’s a learned skill which I recently realized I take for granted – I adopted a rescue border collie and had to teach her a “FEET” command to untangle herself from the leash. Spending some time in the dog yard on a tether greatly enhanced her skills, and greatly reduced the frustration factor for both of us.



Smoke Happy & Relaxed

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Sweetheart Sandy Mandy B-Dandy

I am passionate about sharing the benefits of proper tethering with others. In closing, let me reiterate: Please oppose anti-tethering legislation such as Oregon HB 2783, whether in Oregon or your own state. Surely the problems of poorly done tethering do need to be addressed, just as the problems of poorly done animal husbandry do in whatever flavor they manifest themselves.

But legislation such as this to “throw out the baby with the bath water” puts the benefits of tethering out of reach except (possibly) to a small select few. That is wrong. C’mon folks...address the real issue, not just make blanket easy prohibitions.

Make no mistake...this legislation is a threat to all dog owners, whether or not you tether your dogs. It changes the playing field and moves the discussion onto the slippery slope of “What can you do with your dog?” When a specific healthy and beneficial activity is targeted with legislation, that should be a grave concern to all thoughtful, compassionate and engaged dog owners.



Dogs Relaxing at Home

As an additional reference, here's an article published several years ago by a show dog friend of mine in Colorado. http://www.colomtnmushers.org/PDF-Docs/tethering_NancyRussell.pdf A version of this article was also published in Dog Fancy Magazine.

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