

Testimony SB-835

Before the House Judiciary Committee

My name is Bob Skinner, I'm a 5th generation rancher from as far from Salem as you can get and still be able to call Oregon home. We live in a small remote community located in what we call the "forgotten corner of Oregon". Our economy is definitely tied more to Idaho than Oregon and prior to internet it was impossible to know how Oregon's election returns turned out for days after the polls closed. Most of us here live in the Mountain Time Zone, and are accustomed to always looking at maps of Oregon with the legend covering all of the area in which we live – it's easy for us to feel like the rest of this state really doesn't put much value in us or where we live.

I'm here today to speak against SB-835. I feel that the very name of the bill the "horse tripping bill" is deliberately designed to be misleading. Horse tripping is a Rodeo event that definitely is meant to spill horses and most of us certainly will admit that it is pretty rough. Horse roping as we know it is not designed to take a horse's feet out from under them.

As a past president of the Oregon Cattlemen's Association and having had the opportunity to travel across all of Oregon while carrying out that duty, I know that one of the biggest challenges we have in this state is the urban/rural or in our case the east/west divide. People in western Oregon and especially in the north I-5 corridor don't understand our way of life and the culture that we enjoy. A lot of that issue is cultivated by extremists that not only don't understand but worse than that, spend countless hours and resources trying to change our way of life and our livelihoods. Now with tools like face book, email and others it is so easy to spread their agenda instantly to millions of people. Viewing these extremely edited videos, that are designed to distort the real event is very disgusting to us, to say the least, we urge you to not vote for this bill if you have not seen for yourself what the truth is.

Specific to SB-835, you need to realize that there many precautions the Rodeo Board takes to insure that the horses know where everything is, like fences, gates, and chutes (used for removing ropes etc). Anyone that is abusing or being unnecessarily rough with the roping stock is automatically disqualified by the arena director and/or the flagman. Facilities have been continuously upgraded so as not to hurt horses. This is an ongoing process and most likely will continue in the future as potential problems or threats to the animal's safety become apparent.

If this legislation is passed out of this building, that further drives the "wedge" between east and west Oregon, I can see nothing but more contempt, distrust, and genuine feeling of alienation from the rural areas of this state. This absolutely moves this state in the wrong direction. As state and local governments tell us that we need to be one unified Oregon for the benefit of all – SB-835 would definitely prove to rural Oregon and especially eastern Oregon that the metro area has no intention of understanding and working with us.

Thank you.