

House Judiciary Committee
Opposed to SB 835
April 5, 2013

Good Afternoon Chair Barker and Committee Members:

I am Wannie Mackenzie, a 38-year member of the Jordan Valley Rodeo Board. I would like to talk to you about the rules that we have in place for our Horse Roping and explain why I am opposed to SB 835.

We have many rules and regulations in place to protect the welfare of all the animals used in our rodeo. We have 3 field judges in the arena at all times (I'm one of them) and a barrier which gives the animals a head start. If you break this barrier, you are given a 15-second penalty, whereas in other rodeo events, the penalties are only 5-10 seconds. Rubber on saddle horns is not allowed, again to keep the animals from harm. You must catch the animals around the neck, and the 2-front feet, any other catch will be disqualified. When the ropes come tight, the time is stopped. Stock must be standing up when the ropes come tight. Stock must not be handled roughly at ANY time, and ropers will be disqualified if in the opinion of the field judges they have intentionally done so. Any stock injury will result in immediate disqualification.

The rules are designed to protect the animals at all times. We run the horses through before the rodeo starts to show them where the gates are. The majority of ropers have enough stockmanship skills to handle the animals in a way that will not cause harm, and over the years there has been a minimum of times that the field judges have stepped in. As the runs occur, the field judges are in the arena advising and helping protect the animals. At the rodeo, we have a veterinarian on the grounds at all times. We feel that the cowboys that come to the Jordan Valley Rodeo are some of the best stockmen and horsemen in the rodeo/ranching communities. Most of the people that compete are employees or ranchers themselves and many have attended a Beef Quality Assurance seminar and/or other livestock handling seminars. For example, I have been to numerous horse handling seminars as well as two Temple Grandin seminars on livestock handling. Temple Grandin is a world-renowned consultant to the livestock industry on animal behavior and promotes how to handle livestock in a safe and humane way. She has published several books and movies on the subject. Also, on our ranch, we have become GAP-4 certified. This is a global animal practice rating that is only given out to ranches that qualify for their standards.

For decades, Great Basin buckaroos, Indians, and cowboys have been roping horses by the front legs as a necessary part of their ranch work. It is a highly skilled activity performed in all of Oregon's high desert Great Basin counties. Because horse roping is a skilled activity, these hardworking Eastern Oregonians get together in community ranch rodeos to test and perfect their horse roping skills. The rodeos are important community activities in such places as Jordan Valley, Paisley, Halfway, Burns, McDermott and others. Try to attend one or more of these Eastern Oregon ranch rodeos if you can. You'll see for yourself the men and women who perform these activities as part of their ranch work. This is our heritage, and therefore, I strongly oppose SB 835.

I would like to invite you all to come visit us at our rodeo and also to come visit us on our ranches to see how hard we work at being good stewards of our livestock, wildlife, and our lands.

Thank you very much,

Wannie Mackenzie, Rancher
Jordan Valley, Oregon