



Date: March 18, 2015

To: House Committee on Judiciary
Jeff Barker, Chair
Andy Olsen, Vice Chair
Jennifer Williamson, Vice Chair

From: Sharon Harmon
Executive Director, Oregon Humane Society

Re: House Bill 2888

Chairman Barker and Members of the Committee:

Established in 1868, the Oregon Humane Society is the state's largest and oldest animal welfare organization with over 50,000 supporters statewide. We are not affiliated with any local or national organization.

We are here today to ask for your support of HB 2888.

On a daily basis the Investigations Department at the Oregon Humane Society sees the impact that county budget cuts are having on abused and neglected animals in Oregon. Counties that formerly had officers dedicated to the investigation of animal crimes now defer to OHS on their website as the contact for reporting animal cruelty. Cases involving deceased animals languish in overwhelmed and understaffed district attorney offices while the statute of limitations lapses. Adding animal crimes to the list of criminal activity that the community can monitor will provide another avenue to save suffering animals and hold the owners accountable.

An animal owner pursued under this law would not be absolved of any criminal conduct that stemmed from their "nuisance." Providing the community a means of exposing an animal cruelty situation can aid law enforcement in establishing their probable cause and ultimately seeking prosecution of violators.

Oregonians as a whole abhor animal crime. In addition to the animal victims in a case, the individuals living in close proximity to the cruelty suffer as well. This bill would simply add animal crimes to a list of other crimes that our citizens do not tolerate in their backyard—prostitution, gambling, and drug dealing. Individuals forced to bear witness to crimes perpetrated on animals deserve the opportunity to pursue a remedy and House Bill 2888 bridges that gap.

Sincerely,

Sharon Harmon
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