



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 3468**

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 3468.

Pets are family. That's the sentiment held by pet owners nationwide and particularly in Oregon, where 63.6% of households include a pet. Among pet owners, 63.2 percent consider their pets to be family members. Another 35.8 percent consider their pets to be pets or companions.

For some, a pet may be their only companion, or the only family member with whom they share a relationship with unconditional love and without violence. Pet owners who have this cherished bond often put themselves in harm's way to protect their animal companion.

It is this bond that abusers take advantage of as a tool to control or torment their victims. An abuser can manipulate their victim into staying in an abusive situation, for example, by threatening harm to the pet should they try to leave. Harming or threatening to harm the family pet is also a means of controlling and emotionally abusing victims. Some abusers may harm animals or force other family members to harm animals in an effort to perpetuate a sense that violence in the household is normal.

The OHS investigators see the connection between animal cruelty and human violence on a regular basis. We urge you to take action to protect the people and animals that are vulnerable to this cruel manipulation.

Please vote yes for HB 3468.

Sincerely,

Sharon Harmon
Executive Director, Oregon Humane Society
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***Citations on back of page**

<http://www.ndaa.org/pdf/The%20Link%20Monograph-2014.pdf>

<https://www.avma.org/news/pressroom/pages/TopBotomTenStatesForPets.aspx>

<https://www.avma.org/News/JAVMANews/Pages/130201a.aspx>.

<http://nationallinkcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/DV-Emotional-Blackmail-Arkow.pdf>