



PRESAGE CONSULTING AND TRAINING

## **HB 3468 Adds Threatening to Cause Physical Injury to an Animal to the Crime of Coercion**

Dear Members of the House Judiciary Committee, Chair Barker,  
Vice Chair Williamson, and Vice Chair Olson:

March 17, 2015

My name is Lynn Fairweather, and I am a domestic violence consultant, speaker, and author who has worked in the abuse response and prevention field for the past twenty-two years. As a survivor of abuse, and a nationally recognized expert in assessing and managing high risk domestic violence cases, I can speak to the importance of protecting animals from being threatened as a means of coercion.

I own an Oregon-based firm called Presage Consulting and Training, through which I advise public and private sector professionals on how to keep victims safe and prevent targeted violence. Previously, I have served as an advocate in the domestic violence units of both the Portland Police Bureau, and the Multnomah County Department of Community Justice. Throughout my career, I have encountered many victims who have chosen to remain in or return to an abusive situation because they feared for the life of their loved ones, including their pets. In fact, many years ago, I was one of them. Some of these people were specifically told by their abuser that their animals would suffer harm, including one well known case in which a victim's estranged husband sent her photographs of himself holding a pair of hedge clippers over her dog's head. An accompanying note threatened to sever the animal's ears if the victim did not comply with his terms of re-unification. As terrible as a deed like this sounds, similar action would not currently constitute a crime in the state of Oregon.

Including threats to harm animals in the definition of coercion would take away a powerful tool of intimidation from abusers. It would no longer be legal for them to use beloved pets as a way to keep victims in the relationship or torture them if they leave it. Please join me in supporting this bill, and sending out the unified message that it is unacceptable to threaten any living creature with harm in order to gain power and control over an intimate partner. Thank you very much for your efforts toward protecting *all* the victims of domestic violence. Your time and consideration is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Lynn Fairweather, MSW - Presage Consulting and Training, LLC  
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