



Date: April 7, 2015

To: House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources
Rep. Brad Witt, Chair
Rep. Wayne Kreiger, Vice-Chair
Rep. Susan McLain, Vice-Chair

From: Sharon Harmon
Executive Director, Oregon Humane Society

Re: House Bill 3141

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 3141.

“Among companion animals, dogs are unmatched in their devotion, loyalty and friendship to humankind. Anyone who has ever loved a dog can attest to its hundred-fold return ... Owning a dog is not just a privilege-it's a responsibility. These animals depend on us ... If you are considering taking a dog into your life, you need to think seriously about the commitment that dog ownership entails.”

The statements above appear on the American Kennel Club website, as a preface to a list of suggestions on “How to Be a Responsible Dog Owner.”

The list contains tips on how to research and select the appropriate breed and size of dog for a family's home and lifestyle, how to identify reputable shelters, rescue groups and breeders, the questions to ask when meeting a puppy or dog and what records and information to collect and review prior to purchase or adoption.

HB 3141 acknowledges the trend toward leasing dogs on contract and will amend ORS 646A.075 to hold entities that lease or rent dogs to the same requirements as retail pet stores. It affords individuals choosing this method of pet ownership the same access to their dog's medical history and breeding records as people who purchase a dog or puppy from a retail pet store. A new dog owner, whether purchasing or opting to lease a dog under a contract, must have access to all available information about that dog's previous history; including its breed, age and date of birth, the source of the dog, and any previous vaccination or medical treatment records. Not only are these new pet guardians entitled to this information, it is their duty as responsible pet owners to know as much as possible about the animal they are bringing into their home.

By clarifying certain aspects of the lease/rental agreement option, HB 3141 recognizes that persons choosing this method of pet guardianship should not be cut off from access to their new pet's previous history and records simply because the transaction is classified as a lease agreement. This should hold true for the lease or rental of cats, kittens and other companion animals as well. The responsibility to care and provide for your pet's needs does not hinge on its species. This bill needs to expand its narrow focus and go further in the mandates to include other species.

Withholding information about a dog's background undercuts responsible pet ownership and serves only to create an unnecessary veil of secrecy around a process that should be transparent.

Please support HB 3141.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sharon Harmon".

Sharon Harmon
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