

STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Human Services and Housing

**Fiscal:** Has minimal fiscal impact

**Revenue:** No Revenue Impact

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**Action Date:** 03/30/15

**Action:** Do Pass.

**Meeting Dates:** 03/20, 03/30

**Vote:**

Yeas: 8 - Evans, Gallegos, Hayden, Keny-Guyer, Parrish, Piluso, Stark, Taylor

Exc: 1 - Buehler

**Prepared By:** Robyn Johnson, Committee Administrator

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**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:**

Permits Department of Human Services (DHS) social workers to report suspected animal abuse or neglect as a function of their employment. Provides immunity for social workers acting in good faith. Applies retroactively.

**ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

- Local and state-wide enforcement of animal welfare laws
- Human and animal cross-victimization in family settings
- Allowable disclosure and appropriate reporting under Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

**EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:**

No amendment.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Oregon Humane Society reports that there have been several instances where social workers, through the regular course of their work, have reported animal abuse to local agencies that enforce animal welfare laws.

House Bill 2694 allows, but does not require, DHS social workers to report animal abuse or neglect in their professional capacity without liability when they are acting in good faith.