



HUMANE | OREGON

8508 SE 11TH AVE.
PORTLAND, OR 97202
503.946.1534
INFO@HUMANEOREGON.ORG
WWW.HUMANEOREGON.ORG

Testimony of Humane Oregon on Senate Concurrent Resolution 4 (2017)
Senate Committee on Rules

March 19, 2017

Chair Burdick, Vice Chair Ferrioli, and members of the Committee:

Humane Oregon is a bi-partisan, non-profit organization formed in 2014 to help advocate for animal welfare in Oregon's political process and elections. We are a moderate but progressive animal welfare organization, with board members from many different parts of Oregon's animal welfare community.

Humane Oregon opposes SCR 4 – not because we don't like Border collies, which we do, but because we believe a “rescued shelter dog” as proposed in HCR 16, is a better choice for our state dog.

Border collies undoubtedly have many things to recommend them, as explained very well in the proposed resolution. But every breed of dog is the best to someone, and probably has an argument for reflecting Oregon history or values, and picking one over another seems to us unnecessarily divisive.

We are also concerned that choosing a particular breed of dog as the state dog will promote the purchase of purebred dogs from breeders, which in turn encourages more breeding in a world where the number of dogs already exceeds the number of homes for them. While some breeders no doubt take good care of their dogs, buying dogs creates a market that encourages less scrupulous people to breed dogs in terrible conditions to make a few bucks. Every couple of years it seems, one of those situations makes its way into a heart-breaking story in the media.

On the other hand, choosing a shelter dog as the state dog would encourage people to provide homes for homeless dogs that are already here. It also would recognize and honor all of the great work by local humane societies and shelters in Oregon, and all of the big-hearted people who already have adopted dogs from shelters.

Making the shelter dog the state dog also would answer the charge that naming a state dog is a triviality that distracts from the real work of the Legislature. By encouraging Oregonians to adopt dogs from shelters, the Legislature would be helping to reduce the cost of government, and the burdens on taxpayers, by reducing demands for space and animal care at county animal control facilities.

Oregon would not be the first state to see the wisdom in this. Last year, a Republican-led effort made the “adoptable dog” the state dog of Georgia. In 2015, California made the “shelter pet” its official state pet. In 2013, Colorado declared its state pet to be: “dogs and cats that are adopted from Colorado animal

shelters and rescues.”¹ In each of these instances, lawmakers explained their decision as a way to help educate the public about the need for pet adoption and responsible pet ownership.

With all due respect to Border collies everywhere, Oregon also should use this opportunity to do more than create a symbol. Oregon should use the opportunity to honor its already great pet adoption practices, to educate Oregonians about pet adoption, and to encourage more Oregonians to get their dogs from shelters, which will save both dogs and taxpayer money.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Brian Posewitz
Board Member/Administrator
brianp@humaneoregon.org; 503-946-1534

¹ These are the examples we know about. There may be others.