



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY  
OF THE UNITED STATES**

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF H.C.R. 16**

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THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RULES  
APRIL 27, 2017**

Chair Williamson, Co-Chairs Rayfield and McLane, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on H.C.R. 16, the bill to designate the rescued shelter dog as the official state dog of Oregon. The Humane Society of the United States strongly supports this legislation and urges you to vote YES.

In reviewing the letters and comments that have been submitted on this measure, I note that the overwhelming majority are fully in support. Even more compelling, in my view, are the numerous personal stories told by those who support the measure of the role their rescued dog has played in their lives and their families – and some are even accompanied by wonderful photographs that illustrate just how special these animals are to those who adopted them.

H.C.R. 16 continues Oregon's proud tradition of passing measure to honor and protect man's best friend. In 2009, the legislature passed one of the nation's strongest puppy mill laws to set minimum standards for commercial dog breeders and protect consumers from disreputable breeders and sellers. In 2013, the legislature passed an anti-tethering law that set restrictions on the chaining and tethering of dogs, and strengthened the minimum care standards for all dogs in Oregon.

First, it is important to note this bill is not intended to denigrate reputable breeders of purebred dogs. Rather, it celebrates dogs of all stripes, be they purebred or mutt- and encourages Oregon citizens to consider adopting a dog in need of a home.

Sadly, not all breeders make animal welfare a top priority. When a prospective owner buys a dog from a pet store, online seller or flea market, they're almost certainly getting a dog from a puppy mill. Puppy mills are factory-style breeding facilities that put profit above the welfare of dogs. Animals from puppy mills are housed in shockingly poor conditions with improper medical care,

and are often very sick and behaviorally troubled as a result. The mothers of these puppies are kept in cages to be bred over and over for years, without human companionship and with little hope of ever joining a family. And after they're no longer profitable, breeding dogs are simply discarded—either killed, abandoned or sold at auction.

These puppy mills continue to stay in business through deceptive tactics — their customers are unsuspecting consumers who shop in pet stores, over the Internet or through classified ads. Puppy mills will continue to operate until people stop supporting them. But by visiting your local shelter or rescue and adopting a homeless pet, you can be certain you aren't giving them a dime.

Dogs are considered a member of the family by a substantial portion of U.S. households, providing many benefits to their families such as love, loyalty and an improved sense of well-being. Yet many people are surprised to learn that nationwide, millions of healthy, adoptable dogs are euthanized in shelters annually due to a lack of critical resources and public awareness.

The number of euthanized animals could be reduced dramatically if more people adopted pets instead of buying them. When families choose to adopt, they save a loving animal by making them part of their family and open up shelter space for another animal who might desperately need it.

Many Oregon animal shelters and rescue groups are brimming with happy, healthy dogs just waiting for someone to take them home. With the help of legislation like H.C.R. 16, we can spread the word about the benefits of adoption and work to end the senseless euthanasia of homeless pets nationwide.

With regard to the claim that many Oregon shelter dogs originated in other parts of the country, transporting dogs from areas of over-population into areas where the population of adoptable dogs does not meet the demand is an activity that has been taking place for many years, and has saved countless lives, and created many happy families across the state. The Society of Animal Welfare Administrators (SAWA) has produced best practice guidelines for transport programs to ensure that both sending and receiving shelters are adhering to the highest standards of animal welfare and health considerations, including but not limited to appropriate health certificates and veterinary inspection.

Shelters across Oregon adhere to industry best practices and appropriate oversight. Contrary to scare-mongering from the National Animal Interest Alliance, there is no data to show that dogs within the Oregon shelter system have higher incidences of temperament issues, health concerns, or that dogs from out of state are displacing Oregon dogs in need.

Usually when you adopt a pet, the cost of spay/neuter, first vaccinations (and sometimes even microchipping!) is included in the adoption price, which can save you some of the up-front costs of adding a new member to your family. Furthermore, pets are screened for good health and behavior.

Not only do animals provide us with unconditional love, but they have been shown to be psychologically, emotionally and physically beneficial to their companions. Caring for a pet can

provide a sense of purpose and fulfillment and lessen feelings of loneliness. And when one adopts instead of buying a dog, they can also feel proud about helping an animal in need! H.C.R. 16 acknowledges all of these benefits accorded to us by rescued shelter dogs, whether they be purebreds or mixed breed.

Thank you for considering our position, and for your service to the people and animals of Oregon.