



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF H.B. 2732

**SCOTT BECKSTEAD
SENIOR OREGON DIRECTOR, RURAL OUTREACH DIRECTOR
THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES
SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
MAY 22, 2017**

Chair Prozanski and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on H.B. 2732, the bill to protect children and animals locked in motor vehicles. The Humane Society of the United States strongly supports this legislation and urges you to vote YES.

- Every year, thousands of our companion animals succumb to heatstroke in hot, unattended vehicles. Many times concerned citizens and law enforcement can locate the car's owner in time to take the necessary steps to keep the animal safe. However, that is not always the case, and minutes do matter when an animal is trapped in a hot car.
- Plenty of Oregon residents have come across animals in need of rescue from parked cars on hot days, but aren't sure what to do and fear being sued or arrested if they take unauthorized steps to free an animal.
- This bill would allow Good Samaritans to rescue children and pets in dangerous conditions and help to prevent needless deaths when first responders are not able to arrive at the scene in enough time.
- HB 2732 includes thoughtful language that increases protection for children and animals but also prevents vigilantism. Intervention is carefully defined and kept as a last resort only to be used when all other options have been exhausted and the animal is in visible distress. Specifically, concerned individuals must determine that the vehicle is locked and

the animal is in imminent danger; notify law enforcement; use no more force than necessary; and remain with the animal until law enforcement arrives.

- Seven other states have passed similar legislation with bipartisan support—California, Florida, Massachusetts, Ohio, Tennessee, Vermont, Wisconsin, and just within the past few weeks, Indiana, Colorado, and Arizona. And many other states are considering bills this year, including Connecticut, Maryland, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, and Texas.
- Besides Oregon, nine other states have established immunity provisions for first responders needing to remove pets in hot cars—Maine, Maryland, Nevada, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Virginia, and Washington.
- Good Samaritan bills addressing children left in hot cars have a long history and it makes sense to apply the same concept to the common problem of pets being left in hot cars.
- Cars heat up more quickly than one might think, even with the windows down. On a 72-degree day, a car's internal temperature can heat up to 116 degrees within an hour. On an 80 degree day, a car's internal temperature can shoot up to a sweltering 99 degrees in just 10 minutes. Lowering the window has been shown to have little effect on a car's temperature.
- Pets have a higher body temperature than humans and mostly cool themselves through panting. Humidity of just 35% can slow or shut down their ability to evaporate moisture and control their body temperature.
- Pets left unattended in parked cars are at a much higher risk of theft, especially with an open window as an invitation. Pets may become confused or scared and try to escape or be injured.
- Protecting children and animals from an agonizing death is a problem we can all agree to prevent.

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