



## THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING HB 2227 TO HELP KEEP OUR CHILDREN SAFE

OEA's 46,000 members ask for your support and passage of HB 2227, a modest proposal to add animal control officers to the list of mandatory child abuse reporters. Should it be signed into law, Oregon would join California, Colorado, Maine, Ohio, Virginia, West Virginia, and Washington DC in legislating this abuse-detection best practice.

HB 2227 would add animal control officers to the list of mandatory abuse reporters who are required to notify authorities when, in the course of visiting the home of an alleged animal abuser, they suspect that children on premises are also being victimized. Other professionals called to people's property, such as EMTs and firefighters, are listed as mandatory reporters, and Oregon's teachers believe animal control professionals should be as well.

When our teachers came to us with this idea, we came to understand the link between family violence and animal abuse. Experts say that this "co-occurrence" is common. For instance, a 1983 study of 53 New Jersey families whose child maltreatment was known to the state showed that in 88 percent of the cases, a family pet was also abused. A 1997 study in Bucks County Pennsylvania found a 22.5 percent linkage. These are but two examples among many. In a review of the research, Becker and French (2004) found that "animal abuse has come to be seen as part of a continuum of abuse within families. Animals may be used to coerce children into silence. Some abusers even kill animals in front of the child and threaten that the child or other family members will be next." [These data points are found here: <https://psychweb.chbs.jmu.edu/Graysojh/pdfs/volume101.pdf>.]

Oregon's public-school educators care deeply about keeping students safe. As mandatory reporters themselves, they are on the front lines of this work. They believe that such intervention is everyone's responsibility. HB 2227's goal is to close a loophole in the effort to ensure that this goal is met. One of the teachers who brought this matter to our attention and asked us to request the bill, Brianna Snodgrass, told both House and Senate Committee members the story of one of her neglected students, and how the experience of trying to help him resulted in this proposal.

We thank the bipartisan and bicameral list of legislators who have stepped forward to sponsor this bill (Chief Sponsors: Rep. Jeff Barker, Sen. Floyd Prozanski. Sponsors: Reps. Williamson, Keny-Guyer, Gorsek, Sanchez, Stark, Nearman, Doherty, Piluso; Sens. Knopp and Roblan). This bill passed the House unanimously and out of the Senate Human Services and Judiciary Committees, also on unanimous votes. We hope you'll join them in making Oregon the next state to enact this modest but meaningful bill.

**THANK YOU!**