

January 19, 2023

Representative Julie Fahey, Chair
House Committee On Rules
900 Court St. NE
Salem Oregon 97301

RE: Support HCR 8

Dear Chair Fahey and Committee Members:

On behalf of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), I am offering written comments in support of HCR 8, a resolution to designate the rescue shelter pet the official state pet, serving as a reminder that there are thousands of wonderful pets in shelters and rescues across our state in need of loving homes.

The HSUS is grounded in our partnership with shelters, rescues, and animal care and control around the country. The HSUS also collaborates with and assists a national network of more than four hundred animal shelters and rescues, including with placement of pets rescued from natural and man-made disasters, grant funding and mentorship, and training and expert guidance to law enforcement and other agencies.

It is in that capacity, we witness first-hand that shelters and rescues everywhere including in Oregon are largely at capacity and yet are full of wonderful, family-ready pets.

[According to Shelter Animals Count](#), a centralized, standardized database for animal shelter statistics, the national euthanasia rate for dogs jumped from 5.2% to 7.4% in the first half of 2022. The “pandemic pet” boom that captured headlines and the public perception may have been more anecdote than fact, at least for the animal rescue community: Dog and cat adoptions *actually* declined in 2020.

For that reason, compassion fatigue is an occupational hazard of animal rescue work. Shelter workers carry a heavy burden just as with other helping professionals. It is the emotional distress and burnout that come from trying to save every dog and cat encountered.

While HCR 8 might seem like it is only symbolic, is much more than that.

With Oregon [ranked the sixth most pet friendly state in the nation by SafeWise](#), HCR 8 not only sends a message that Oregon values adoption and prioritizes rescue shelter animals, it also honors the compassionate staff and volunteers working daily to save lives by finding loving homes for the adoptable dogs and cats in their care, allowing them to make space for the next round of dogs and cats in need of their second chance.

Sincerely,

Kelly Peterson
Oregon State Director
The Humane Society of the United States

