

Robin Russell LLC

Ph: 503-807-2480 www.RRexecsearch.com
1550 Old Sheridan Road, McMinnville, Oregon 97128

The Honorable Floyd Prozanski, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary
Oregon State Senate

February 21, 2023

Dear Senator Prozanski:

I am writing to urge your support in passing Senate Bill 696, which would fund an Animal Cruelty Special Prosecutor at the Department of Justice division of the Oregon Attorney General's office.

I am a private citizen, not affiliated with the organizations sponsoring Senate Bill 696, and am writing because I feel so strongly about the need for this position and also the statement it makes to the community. This is what I have learned:

1. **Animals are part of nearly everyone's life in some way or another.** They are our companions, they can ease loneliness and depression, they guide and serve us, they provide income, they teach us responsibility, they rescue and protect us, and sometimes give us the only reason to get out of bed in the morning! As with children, animals are sentient beings dependent on us and completely vulnerable without a voice of their own.
2. **There is a well-documented link between animal cruelty and violence against people.** Animal cruelty is a predictor of current and future violence, including crimes of assault, rape, murder, arson, domestic violence, and sexual abuse of children. Animal cruelty is a better predictor of sexual abuse than a history of homicide, arson, or weapons convictions! Animal fighting for sport is associated with the underworld of drug trafficking, money laundering, and illegal weapons. Animal abuse is like a canary in a coal mine for law enforcement, and should be taken very seriously.
3. **Prosecuting animal abuse cases is a complex and technically challenging process.** Usually these cases are assigned to an inexperienced DDA without

resources or background in this area. My understanding is that Oregon was the first in the country to test a grant-funded special prosecutor for animal crimes. Thanks to Jake Kamins the model has proven successful and is in demand all over the state. Since then some **other states have formalized Special Prosecutor for Animal Cruelty positions as an independent category under their Department of Justice. It's time for Oregon to do the same.**

Passage of SB 696 is important to me personally, and to countless other constituents who care about animals. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Robin E. Russell
Owner

Robin Russell L.L.C.
an independent executive search firm

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McMinnville, Or. 97128
www.RRexecsearch.com
