

Submitter: Gretchen Forgue
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure: HB3214

NO to HB3214

House Judiciary Committee Members,

As a dedicated advocate for animal welfare, I implore you to vote NO to House Bill 3214. Oregon already has extensive animal cruelty and welfare laws including ORS Chapter 167, titled Offenses Against General Welfare and Animals. Enforce those current laws!

It seems HB3214 lacks research. For example, the bill would ban educational programs including any tortoise or monitor lizard; some species weigh less than one pound as adults for both groups of reptiles. There certainly is no public safety concern and if animal cruelty is happening, then current laws can be enforced.

The bill uses undefined terms that leave law interpretation open to enforcement officers to cite good citizens providing important conservation and education outreach. If this bill passes, legislative intent is gone! It is written poorly and rife with overreach. The fact is that this legislation is unnecessary. Punish the "bad actors" and the criminals. No new law is needed to protect animals as Oregon can already prosecute animal abusers.

Superfluous and ambiguous laws are becoming commonplace. Tax dollars and legislative resources are continually being wasted to propose duplicative laws. Even worse, collective punishment is becoming an accepted practice in our government. Instead of focusing on criminals, many new laws instead punish good citizens because everyone is assumed to be guilty of criminal activities.

Among other overreaching measures, this bill bans many educational outreach programs before school students and Scout troops, classifying such beneficial programs as inherently cruel. Those who would travel with their animals to teach school children about tortoises, certain lizards, and many other animals will be made into criminals!

This bill is far-reaching and rife with unintended consequences, including making criminals out of those dedicated individuals who responsibly conduct educational programs with animals. Thank you for your time and consideration on this matter. Please realize that HB3214 is illogical and unjust. Have a good day.

From personal experience I can say that animals have an amazing healing effect on people, children and adults alike. (All types of animals) I have seen children with disabilities brought to life by learning and handling animals brought to classroom type settings. How anyone can think this bill is a good idea is sadly mistaken. Education about the animals around us is important. We should never take that opportunity away from those brought the joy of receiving it and those that enjoy giving it. One does not need to be a certified zoologist to love and share in the experience and wonder of animals.

Sincerely,
Gretchen Forgue