

Submitter: Sierra Gest  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary  
Measure: HB3214

NO to HB3214

Dear House Judiciary Committee Members,

As an Oregon animal welfare advocate, I oppose HB3214. Oregon Revised Statute Chapter 167, titled Offenses Against General Welfare and Animals, protects animals from animal cruelty by allowing punishment to those violating animal welfare laws. Current laws need to be enforced rather than passing this overreaching and unjust legislation.

The Committee was misinformed during the March 16 hearing many times. You were told that educational programs are exempt. This is false! Those programs are only exempt if you are an accredited facility or licensed party (with most listed accreditations being impossible unless you are a large, public facility). What it does ban is me taking a turtle and a tortoise into a classroom to teach children about the differences between turtles and tortoises. It bans me from taking a three-ounce pygmy Mulga monitor and a four-ounce sugar glider to a Boy Scout meeting to discuss how reptiles are different than mammals.

HB3214 lacks research and several radical animal rights groups are misrepresenting what this bill does. The Committee was continually misinformed during the March 16 hearing and those who could actually educate about what the bill does and the affected species were not permitted time to speak. Instead, the Committee heard that only "giant" and "large and wild" animals are covered under this bill. As examples, 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. One species of banned marsupial, the sugar glider, only weighs four to five ounces! There certainly is no public safety concern and if animal cruelty is happening, then current laws can be enforced.

The bill 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.

Collective punishment is becoming an accepted practice in our government. Instead of focusing on criminals, many new laws punish good citizens because everyone is assumed to be guilty of criminal activities.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this matter. Please realize that HB3214 is illogical and unjust, and that legislative intent does not matter when law enforcement officers must enforce what the law actually says and not what legislators intended through poor bill language. Have a good day.

Sincerely,  
Sierra Gest