



February 7, 2024

House Committee on Judiciary  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court St NE  
Salem, OR 97301

**Re: Support HB 4043**

Dear Chair Kropf, Vice Chairs Andersen and Wallan, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Oregon-based supporters of the Humane Society of the United States, please accept this testimony in support of HB 4043, which, among other upgrades and improvements, would increase the penalties for intentional and knowing abuse and neglect of animals, criminalize attempts to conceal animal cruelty from authorities, and close the loophole in future ownership of animals for a specific period of time.

Oregonians care about animal protection, and HB 4043 is in line with that sentiment, refining our cruelty code such that extreme cases of animal abuse including neglect do not go unaddressed.

Crimes against animals can be nuanced when the suffering is a result of failure to provide care. In situations rooted in access to care and resources, HSUS strongly advocates for support-based intervention. While most people care deeply about their pets and will take advantage of the many pet resources available in our state, there are times when animals languish and suffer due to callous disregard. Intentional, prolonged neglect is a crime of violence, and HB 4043 is a legal means to pursue justice for silent victims of intentional and knowing animal abuse and neglect crimes.

Further, HSUS supports strengthening and closing the loophole in Oregon's statute preventing future ownership for convicted animal abusers from "possessing or residing with" animals for a reasonable period of time, with the goal of disrupting the cycle of animal cruelty, by separating offenders from potential new victims, saving animal lives, and protecting entire communities. HB 4043 also offers defendants who did not act intentionally or knowingly (who would otherwise be subject to the ban) with the opportunity to have their ban modified by requesting a hearing before a sentencing court.

Recidivism rates for animal abuse are staggering – nearly 100% for certain crimes, such as animal hoarding. Moreover, animal abusers pose a serious risk to local communities. People found guilty of animal cruelty overwhelmingly go on to recommit acts of cruelty against animals – and are five times more likely to abuse humans.

HB 4043 would further bolster Oregon's existing animal cruelty laws, providing a much-needed tool for law enforcement by preventing and cracking down on aggravated animal abuse while also balancing an animal cruelty crime as a product of a lack of education or knowledge of the part of the neglecter.

Thank you for your consideration.

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