

## Testimony in Favor of House Bill 4043

Dear committee members,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 4043. My name is Amanda Muse, and I am the founder and operations officer for the Willamette Horse Outreach Alliance (WHOA) based in Eugene, Lane Co., Oregon. WHOA was established in February 2020 by a collective of private rescuers with the aim of aiding neglected equines throughout Lane Co. Since our inception, we have provided care and assistance to 99 horses and mules throughout the pacific northwest, offering rehabilitation, re-homing, or sanctuary when necessary. Recently, we have partnered with Lane County Animal Services to extend our support to equines under investigation or in need of surrender or seizure.

As a fervent advocate for animal rights and welfare, I wholeheartedly endorse House Bill 4043. This crucial legislation not only addresses deficiencies in current animal cruelty laws but also introduces vital measures to safeguard animals and secure justice for victims of abuse.

House Bill 4043 brings about significant amendments to existing animal cruelty laws, particularly concerning offenses such as animal abuse and neglect in the first degree. By fortifying these statutes, HB4043 equips law enforcement with more effective tools to combat severe acts of cruelty, hold perpetrators accountable, and curtail repeated offenses.

While exact figures on recidivism rates for animal abuse may be challenging to ascertain due to various factors, including underreporting and methodological differences, research indicates a significant correlation between animal cruelty and subsequent criminal behavior. Studies published in reputable journals like the Journal of Interpersonal Violence and the Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law have highlighted this correlation, emphasizing the urgency of preventive measures such as those proposed in House Bill 4043.

One of the most commendable aspects of House Bill 4043 is the imposition of a prohibition on convicted individuals from possessing or residing with animals of the same genus or any domestic animal for a five-year period following their conviction. This provision serves as a potent deterrent to potential offenders, sends a clear message about the gravity of animal cruelty, and helps prevent further harm to vulnerable animals.

Furthermore, the five-year duration of the prohibition strikes a balance between accountability and opportunities for rehabilitation. It affords convicted individuals time to reflect on their actions, undergo necessary rehabilitation, and demonstrate their commitment to responsible behavior before potentially regaining the privilege of animal ownership.

House Bill 4043 also introduces a new crime targeting individuals who interfere with investigations into offenses against animals, underlining the importance of upholding justice in cases of animal cruelty.

In conclusion, House Bill 4043 represents a significant advancement in the ongoing quest to safeguard animals from cruelty and neglect. By bolstering existing laws, imposing stricter penalties, and providing avenues for rehabilitation, this legislation underscores our society's commitment to the welfare of all living beings. I urge lawmakers to support and enact House Bill 4043 without delay, reaffirming our collective dedication to justice and compassion for animals.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Amanda Muse

Founder and Operations Officer

Willamette Horse Outreach Alliance (WHOA)

[Note: Links provided for additional reading on the links between animal and human violence, as well as the benefits of possession bans.]

links between animal and human violence:

<https://leb.fbi.gov/articles/featured-articles/the-link-between-animal-cruelty-and-human-violence>

<https://www.sheriffs.org/animalcrueltygateway>

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0306624X01455003>

<https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/journal/journal-interpersonal-violence>

benefits of possession bans:

<https://aldf.org/article/possession-bans-a-model-law/>

<https://www.animallaw.info/content/anti-cruelty-laws-restrain-future-ownership-animals>

<https://paisano-online.com/36656/opinion/commentary/end-apathy-towards-animals/>