



**Date:** March 29, 2017

**To:** **House Committee on Judiciary**  
Representative Jeff Barker, Chair  
Representative Andy Olson, Vice-Chair  
House Democratic Leader Jennifer Williamson, Vice-Chair  
Representative Chris Gorsek  
Representative Mitch Greenlick  
Representative Ann Liniger  
Representative Bill Post  
Representative Tawna Sanchez  
Representative Sherrie Sprenger  
Representative Duane Stark  
Representative A. Richard Vial

**From:** **Sharon Harmon**  
CEO, Oregon Humane Society

**Re:** **House Bill 3283**

Established in 1868, the Oregon Humane Society is the state's largest and oldest animal welfare organization with over 50,000 supporters statewide. We are not affiliated with any local or national organization. **We are here today to ask for your support of HB 3283.**

Motivated by our mission alone, OHS comes to the aid of animals who have been victims of animal cruelty; not just at the scene or immediately upon intake at the shelter but throughout the duration of that animal's tenure with our organization—a cost that has been routinely overlooked or underrepresented in criminal cases across the state.

In 2015, OHS assisted Jackson County Animal Services by serving a search warrant on a breeder of small dogs in Applegate, Oregon. A total of 41 dogs and puppies were removed from the property, many in need of medical services. On medical care alone, to treat and restore the dogs to good health, OHS invested over \$25,000 but the costs associated with them did not stop there. Many of them were so matted they need grooming that took hours, some of them were pregnant and needed to be cared for through their pregnancy and immediately after giving birth, others suffered behavioral issues based on how they were housed in the care of the defendant and

significant efforts by the OHS behavior staff were necessary prior to making them available for adoption. In this case the defendant was ordered to pay *less than half* of the medical costs connected with the animals she neglected.

In 2013, OHS responded to a request for assistance in Columbia County on another dog breeder housing her animals in neglectful conditions. On the day the warrant was executed, OHS took over 100 dogs and 20 horses into protective custody. Through the duration of many court proceedings over the course of two years the level of direct care provided to this victim population of animals never wavered and cost OHS over \$200,000. To date, the defendant has contributed \$300 towards the \$158,000 she was sentenced to repay and has another two years to make payments. For any other animal care agency in the state that would be a monetary setback from which they would not be able to recover. This case is a shining example of how a single animal cruelty case could easily bankrupt a municipality or well-meaning animal care agency and the subsequent chilling effect on investigation and intervention in this type of crime.

Even more financially debilitating are the cases in which OHS intervenes on behalf of abused or neglected livestock. In 2012, OHS assisted in an animal care capacity with the seizure of a herd of over 150 starving and medically needy Hereford cattle. The county itself could not take on the financial burden of the animal care associated with the case and the criminal neglect of these animals would have perpetuated if not for OHS' willingness to expend significant resources to provide the care that no other agency could. Ultimately, OHS spent well over \$100,000 on the care of the cattle and has yet to receive a single penny of the \$90,000 the defendant was sentenced to repay.

OHS relies solely on the generosity of its supporters to continue to be able to come to the aid of law enforcement agencies and county animal control agencies as it did in these case examples. The individuals and foundations who donate to OHS do so because they care deeply about the mission of the organization and for all of the animals who benefit from what OHS has to offer. They do not donate to offset the amount of money a convicted defendant has to repay OHS. The financial contributions to OHS should not be a factor considered by the court when determining the amount of money a defendant is required to repay. That individual should have to repay the full price of the cost to take care of the animal(s) s/he victimized.

**Please vote yes on HB 3283.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sharon Harmon". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Sharon Harmon  
CEO, Oregon Humane Society  
sharon@oregonhumane.org  
(503) 416-2992