



HUMANE VOTERS | OREGON

Testimony of Humane Voters Oregon on HB 4053
House Committee on Rules

February 20, 2020

Chair Holvey, Vice Chairs Drazan and Smith Warner, and Members of the Committee:

Humane Voters Oregon is a nonprofit organization that works in Oregon's political process and elections to promote humane treatment of animals. We are not affiliated with any other state or national organization.

Humane Voters Oregon supports House Bill 4053 as amended by the House Committee on Natural Resources.

By allowing counties to license dogs without requiring *immediate* proof of rabies inoculation, HB 4053 will increase the percentage of dog owners who license their dogs. That would be good for both people and animal welfare for at least two reasons. First, it would make it easier for county animal control agencies to reunite lost dogs with their owners. Second, because counties charge a fee for licensing a dog, it would increase funding to county animal control agencies, which provide important animal welfare services including shelter services.

The bill would not affect the requirement that dogs have rabies inoculations. It would only give counties more flexibility in enforcing that requirement when they license dogs. Requiring proof of inoculation before issuing a license, which is the current law, would make sense if licensing laws were easier to enforce. However, according to county animal control agencies, many people elect simply not to license their dog, with little threat of sanction, because proving a current rabies inoculation is too cumbersome under current licensing systems.

HB 4053 would still require counties to ensure that licensed dogs have rabies inoculations – by requiring owners to follow up with proof later, or by providing other means acceptable to the Oregon Health Authority.

In sum, HB 4053 would increase compliance with dog licensing laws without any likely decrease (and potentially an increase) in compliance with rabies inoculation laws. This would be good for both people and dogs in Oregon.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Brian Posewitz

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Director, Humane Voters Oregon