



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY  
OF THE UNITED STATES**

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[humanesociety.org](http://humanesociety.org)

Sen. Floyd Prozanski, Chair  
Sen. Kim Thatcher, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Judiciary

FROM: The Humane Society of the United States

RE: Support SB 696

February 22, 2023

Dear Chairman Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher and Members of the Committee:

The Humane Society of the United States supports SB 696, which would fund an animal cruelty prosecutor within the Oregon Department of Justice. An expert dedicated to animal crimes would have an incredible impact for the people and pets of our state.

Animal cruelty can range from unintentional neglect to premeditated violence. The latter can be a predictor of harm to the most vulnerable: children, intimate partners, and elders. For example, studies from the United States Secret Service links animal abuse to mass attacks in public spaces. Organized animal fighting often has connections to international cartels and human, weapons, and drug trafficking. The sexual assault of animals is often tied to child abuse and child pornography rings. The relationship between harm to animals and harm to others is well established.

Part of this position could include raising awareness among law enforcement about this important link. Each year, the HSUS' Law Enforcement Training Center, operated in partnership with the National Sheriffs' Association's National Law Enforcement Center on Animal Abuse, provides training to thousands of enforcement officers each year on investigating illegal animal cruelty and fighting crimes.

In 2022, we hosted 111 seminars, training nearly 8,620 enforcement officers, prosecutors, and animal care professionals across the country, including in Oregon in partnership with the Oregon State Police and multiple other local law enforcement agencies.

We have seen firsthand the impact of training and expertise. A designated prosecutor within the Department of Justice could identify warning signs of potentially violent offenders and serve as a resource for law enforcement agencies and prosecutors across the state.

Sincerely,

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