

Submitter: Darcy Bedortha
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure: HB3214

Dear Representatives Kropf, Reynolds, Chaichi and Andersen
and all others concerned,

I am writing to ask that you vote no on HB 3214. This bill is far too vague and poorly written, and leaves some of our best youth development programs at risk of being banned at the whims of people in places of power who are both disconnected from and uneducated about livestock.

4-H, FFA, High School Rodeo and Junior Livestock Shows are all part of Oregon's heritage and rural Oregon's culture. These programs are widely recognized for their powerful, positive and highly successful youth development. Young people who are engaged in these programs have increased graduation rates and are more likely to attend and find success in post-secondary education.

These programs teach leadership, business and financial skills, all the Social Emotional skills such as communication, compassion, collaboration, ability to take perspective, awareness of self and others, etc. They teach responsibility, self-discipline, decision-making and commitment. Youth who are engaged in these programs are highly employable. They learn to be humble winners and hopeful losers. They learn to set goals and work towards achieving them, and they learn to put the needs and welfare of the animals in their care before their own pleasure.

These programs are known for the exceptional adult mentors, coaches and volunteers. It is widely known that one of the primary indicators for healthy adolescent development is the presence and involvement of positive adults.

There are many substantial arguments to be made for why the livestock industry, including rodeos, horse shows and other livestock shows are important for adults, communities and regions across this great state, for cultural, social and economic reasons. Today I choose to focus on our youth. Please vote no on this dangerous and poorly presented bill.

Thank you
Darcy Bedortha, MS, MA
Founder and Director, HORSES on the Ranch
equine-assisted psychotherapy and learning