

Submitter: Rheann Casey
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure: HB3214

Dear House Judiciary Committee Members,

I oppose House Bill 3214 as an Oregon resident who cares about animals. Oregon has extensive animal cruelty and welfare laws including ORS Chapter 167, titled Offenses Against General Welfare and Animals. Enforce those current laws!

The Committee was misinformed during the March 16 hearing many times. You were told that educational programs are exempt. This is false! Those programs are only exempt if you are an accredited facility or licensed party (with most listed accreditations being impossible unless you are a large, public facility). What it does ban is me taking a turtle and a tortoise into a classroom to teach children about the differences between turtles and tortoises. It bans me from taking a three-ounce pygmy Mulga monitor and a four-ounce sugar glider to a Boy Scout meeting to discuss how reptiles are different than mammals.

HB3214 lacks research and several radical animal rights groups are misrepresenting what this bill does. The Committee was continually misinformed during the March 16 hearing and those who could actually educate about what the bill does and the affected species were not permitted time to speak. Instead, the Committee heard about that only “giant” and “large and wild” animals are covered under this bill. As examples, the bill would ban educational programs including any tortoise or monitor lizard; some species weigh less than one pound as adults for both groups of reptiles. One species of banned marsupial, the sugar glider, only weighs four to five ounces! There certainly is no public safety concern and if animal cruelty is happening, then current laws can be enforced.

The bill uses vague definitions that leave law interpretation open to enforcement officers to cite good citizens providing important conservation and education outreach. If this bill passes, legislative intent is gone! It is written poorly and rife with overreach. The fact is that this legislation is unnecessary. Punish the “bad actors” and the criminals. No new law is needed to protect animals as Oregon can already prosecute animal abusers.

Superfluous and ambiguous laws are becoming commonplace. Tax dollars and legislative resources are continually being wasted to propose duplicative laws. Even worse, collective punishment is becoming an accepted practice in our government.

Instead of focusing on criminals, many new laws instead punish good citizens because everyone is assumed to be guilty of criminal activities.

This bill is far-reaching and rife with unintended consequences, including making criminals out of those dedicated individuals who responsibly conduct educational programs with animals. Thank you for your time and consideration on this matter. Please realize that HB3214 is illogical and unjust. Have a good day.

Sincerely,
Rheann casey