



HUMANE SOCIETY
LEGISLATIVE FUND™

2024 STATE LEGISLATIVE CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE: OREGON

Candidate Name: _____

Candidate Address: _____

Office Sought: _____ District: _____

Staff Contact Name: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____ Website: _____

Animals play an important role in the lives of many Americans. Countless citizens look to their state government to protect animals from cruel treatment and exploitation. Humane-minded individuals care deeply about the positions their elected officials take on animal protection issues.

For information on the range and details of our issue areas, please visit the websites of the Humane Society Legislative Fund (hslf.org) or the Humane Society of the United States (humanesociety.org).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

What actions have you taken to promote the welfare of animals in the past? (Please include any action taken in an official or unofficial context.)

Are there any animal welfare programs or issues of importance to you that you would take the initiative on after you are elected?

Will you post information in your campaign materials stating your positions on animal protection issues?

Do you have, or have you had in the past, any pets that have made an impact on you personally?

STATE ISSUES:

Members of state legislatures influence animal protection policy by sponsoring or cosponsoring humane legislation, opposing government programs that use taxpayer funds to harm animals, supporting funding for government programs to protect animals and for adequate enforcement of animal welfare laws, and opposing inhumane laws or those which weaken current protections. We'd like to know your position on the following important animal welfare issues, which are subject to debate in your state.

PETS AND CRUELTY

Puppy Mills: While the state of Oregon requires that dog breeders meet certain standards for the care of their animals, there is no oversight or licensing to hold dog and cat breeders accountable for failing to meet those base-level standards of adequate food, water, space to move around, and medical attention. Since 2016, there have been 7 high-profile seizures of dozens of mistreated, neglected dogs from Oregon puppy mills, and far greater suspected noncompliance.

There are at least 159 dog breeders identified in the state, but only 3 are USDA-licensed and inspected. That means the overwhelming majority of Oregon breeders are subject to very little oversight or accountability. Meanwhile, licensing, regulation, and inspection are requirements for Oregon animal rescue and shelter entities (primarily nonprofit organizations) to provide their no-cost services to pets and people in both rural and urban communities across Oregon.

A licensing program for Oregon dog and cat breeders would establish standards for greater transparency, responsibility, accountability, and consistency of care across all levels and sectors of dog and cat stewardship. Further, such a program would ensure an enforcement mechanism for illegal puppy mill operations; heightened consumer awareness and protection; and education of proper animal care and breeding practices.

Will you support legislation to establish a dog and cat breeder licensing program for better governance, requiring that dog and cat breeders be regulated by the Oregon Department of Agriculture and meet the standards for licensing to operate?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Not Sure

Shelter and Rescue Support: For years now, Oregon has faced a crisis of overburdened animal shelters and rescues. In response, the 2023 Oregon Legislature approved a resolution that made the rescue shelter dog and cat Oregon's official state pet to encourage more shelter adoptions across the state. However, the lifesaving service shelters and rescues provide will become substantially more difficult to maintain, if the Department of Agriculture's proposed drastic license fee increase for animal rescue entities is adopted.

Under existing law, animal rescue entities, who are largely nonprofit organizations, pay an annual license fee of \$375. Under the proposed rule the fee increases significantly. For a shelter or rescue assisting 201 – 500 animals a year, their license fee increases to \$1,200 a year, and for a shelter or rescue assisting more than 500 animals a year, their license fee increases to \$2,200. In other words, the more animals an organization saves, the higher its fee. In the face of a shelter and rescue capacity crisis in Oregon, increased license fees will place an onerous and unsustainable strain on our animal rescue entities, and many animals could be at risk as a result.

When the 2019 Oregon Legislature created the Animal Rescue Entity Program, funding was approved only through the 2019-2021 Biennium. As a result, the Department of Agriculture must cover the cost of the program from license fees, totaling an average of \$360,000 a biennium. There is a renewed interest in providing ongoing funding for the Animal Rescue Program so that the operational costs do not fall on the backs of at-capacity Oregon rescues and shelters, largely comprised of nonprofit organizations, focused on providing second chances to the thousands of homeless pets across Oregon.

Would you support general fund money being directed to the Department of Agriculture Animal Rescue Program, to help provide a more equitable and reasonable solution to support Animal Rescue Program?

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Not Sure

Pets in Low-Income Subsidized Housing: Monthly pet rents, non-refundable pet fees, and a variety of pet deposits are all legal in Oregon rental housing, and there is no cap on their amount. 72% of Americans report that pet-friendly rental housing is difficult to find, and 59% agree that where it is available, it's too pricey to afford. Pet ownership has proven to make housing and financial security a significant challenge for renters—particularly for low-income individuals or families—as those with pets often feel powerless and discriminated against while seeking subsidized housing opportunities. Surrendering companion animals means losing a critical source of comfort, purpose, and family. As such, this alone creates a major barrier between housing security and the services available to low-income pet owners.

Will you support legislation requiring that low-income subsidized housing receiving state funding or tax credits maintain pet-inclusive rental policies, including banning prohibitions on pets based on breed, size, or weight and prohibiting non-refundable pet deposits?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Vulnerable Populations and their Pets: An [Oregon Statewide Shelter Study](#) (2019) of individuals experiencing homelessness revealed that the inability to shelter with a pet ranked among the top ten barriers to shelter. In response, the 2023 Oregon Legislature approved \$1 million in funding through the Emergency Housing Account Fund for qualified homeless and domestic violence shelters to accommodate pets, helping to address barriers to safe shelter and providing life-saving resources for individuals in crisis with pets. The inclusion and consideration of pets ensures that individuals experiencing homelessness or intimate partner violence can shelter safely with their companion animal without having to choose between a safe space inside or with their beloved pet outside.

Will you continue to support this important program through the Emergency Housing Account Fund in the Oregon Housing and Community Services 2025-2027 budget, and consider increasing the funding should the grant requests from homeless and domestic violence shelters exceed available funds?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Veterinary Telehealth: The U.S. is currently experiencing a nationwide shortage of veterinarians and vet technicians, with profound effects on the accessibility of in-office veterinary care to pet owners across the country. What's more, the cost of veterinary care has risen by 10% in the past year, and the lack of veterinarians and veterinary professional staff relative to demand plays a significant role in these increasing costs. In fact, according to [Human Animal Support Services](#), the inability to afford or access to veterinary care is regularly cited as one of the top two reasons for pet relinquishment nationwide. Telehealth veterinary medicine is an innovative cost savings program for low-income pet owners, removing barriers to access to veterinary care, by allowing veterinarians the discretion to establish a virtual veterinary-client-patient-relationship through video appointments. As with the rise in human telehealth visits in recent years, veterinary telehealth has proven a faster, easier, and more effective solution for matters like issuing routine prescription fillings, diagnosing minor ailments, or assessing the improvement of a case diagnosed in person. Per the new laws in California and Arizona, it is, essential that veterinarians "employ sound professional judgment to determine whether using telehealth is an appropriate method for delivering medical advice or treatment."

Will you support efforts to allow increased telehealth options with licensed veterinarians for instances where a companion animal needs veterinary attention but does not require an in-person examination?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

WILDLIFE

Native Carnivore Protection: A majority of Oregon voters passed Measure 18 in 1994, prohibiting the hunting of cougars with packs of radio-collared dogs ("hounding"). An even greater majority voted in 1996 to reject a measure to repeal Measure 18. Thus, Oregonians have stated twice that they oppose the hounding of cougars for sport, or for "trophy hunting," because it is inhumane, unsporting, and violates the ethics of fair chase. Moreover, a 2019 poll by Remington Research Group found that a 65% majority of voters are opposed to the trophy hunting of Oregon's iconic cougars. Still, almost every year since 1997, legislation has been introduced to either weaken and/or repeal Measure 18.

Will you support efforts to uphold Measure 18, which banned the cruel, unsportsmanlike practices of bear baiting and hound hunting of bears and cougars in Oregon?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Coexistence: Oregonians derive immense ecological, economic, and recreational value from the state's diverse wildlife. However, as humans and wildlife come into more frequent contact, it is critical that the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife have the resources needed to promote wildlife stewardship and reduce conflicts across urban, suburban, and rural Oregon. The Wildlife Coexistence Package is an effective strategy to engage growing and increasingly diverse populations across all landscapes. This proposed funding package (pp. 786-789) is a result of a 2022 Oregon Fish and Wildlife Taskforce that saw diverse stakeholder consensus over the need to prioritize proactive humane solutions to reduce and respond to human-wildlife interactions. Specifically, the Coexistence Funding Package would fund several new wildlife coexistence biologist positions located around the state, a wildlife communications coordinator position to lead a Living with Wildlife Outreach Campaign, and a small grant program to support Oregon's wildlife rehabilitation centers, which serve on the frontlines of human-wildlife interactions.

Would you support the funding of the Wildlife Coexistence Funding Package within the Oregon Department Fish and Wildlife's 2025-2027 Budget?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

FARM ANIMAL PROTECTION AND FOOD SAFETY

Mink Farming: Mink farming poses serious health risks to humans and animals, alike. A growing body of science shows that due to similarities between their respiratory receptors and ours, mink make for particularly high-risk "mixing vessels" for producing dangerous variants of respiratory diseases, often transmissible to humans. Mink are highly susceptible to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19—outbreaks have been confirmed on fur farms in Oregon and 15 other states, with over 16,000 mink reported dead from the virus and high numbers of cases contracted by workers. Moreover, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that people in Michigan were infected with SARS-CoV-2 that contained unique mink-related mutations, suggesting mink-to-human transmission of unique COVID-19 variants. In 2023, Oregon was also ranked the fourth state nationally in the spread of HPAI, the avian flu, due largely to a mass outbreak among mink at M&M Ruef, Inc., Oregon's largest mink fur farm—and the spread of this virus shows no sign of slowing. The stacked wire cages on mink fur farms cause mink to become highly stressed and thus immune-compromised, making them even more susceptible to infection. These farms are the ideal setting for both pathogens to circulate, and the cruelty of extreme, unhygienic confinement to endure.

Would you support efforts to urge Oregon state agencies to respond to this public health crisis by phasing out commercial mink farming in Oregon?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Sure

Thank you for your time! Please return the completed questionnaire to:

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Rev. 4/12/2024