



LAWS WOULD COMBAT ANIMAL CRUELTY

State legislators in Salem are moving forward with bills to protect animals living in Oregon. Many of the new laws would give law enforcement officers additional means to make sure existing laws against animal cruelty are obeyed.

As the weather heats up, the issue of dogs being left in hot cars heats up too. The “dogs in cars bill,” as its sponsor Sen. Tim Knopp (R-Bend) calls it, is moving forward in the Legislature. SB 614 would allow law enforcement officers to break into a vehicle to save an animal.

“Law enforcement didn’t feel they had the authority to break in,” Knopp says. Sometimes they have to break a window or do serious damage to the car, and this bill would guarantee they wouldn’t be sued for the damages.

Lane County District Attorney Alex Gardner says the county already has an ordinance that allows an animal welfare

officer or a peace officer to enter a car and impound an animal that they believe may be in danger of dying.

Knopp says SB 614 would be enforced the same way across the state — any officer could break into a hot car if they had probable cause to believe that an animal was being subjected to abuse. The bill passed out of the Senate and the House Committee on Judiciary with a “do pass” recommendation.

Rep. Brad Witt (D-Clatskanie) has proposed a new law every session dealing with animal cruelty issues. This session, he’s sponsoring HB 2888 — a bill that would allow individuals or the court to shut down establishments where animal cruelty is taking place. It uses a “nuisance abatement” structure, meaning actions like an injunction (an order for the cruel acts to stop or to shut the establishment down) could be taken against people who were causing the “nuisance.”

HB 2888 would not make any additional cruel acts against animals illegal. It solely gives communities an extra tool to eliminate places where animal cruelty is occurring.

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HERSHELL NORWOOD

Born on the farm near Cairo, Georgia, where his great-granddad was a sharecropper, Hershell Norwood migrated north with his family as a young child and started school in Orange, New Jersey. After one year of high school, he got a scholarship to Hampton School, a boarding school in New Hampshire. He excelled at football and moved on to Tufts University near Boston. “I played quarterback in high school and running back in college,” he says, “and got a degree in theater.” He began work on an MFA in acting at Brandeis in the late 1970s, then spent a decade selling ad time on NBC Boston. “I did some talent work, acted in programs and TV commercials,” he says. “I finished my MFA in 1990. I wanted to pursue a Ph.D.” He taught at a junior college in Newark, New Jersey, and at Virginia State in Petersburg, and pursued the Ph.D. at Tufts, at the University of Maryland, and at Texas Tech, where he wound up with a master’s in playwriting. Since moving to Eugene in 2009, he has acted in local productions and spent his time writing, working on six plays and a book on African American theater. “Ultimately, I’m a playwright,” he says. Norwood’s newest play, *Fell the Tallest Tree*, *Judgment of Paul Robeson*, celebrated its world premiere May 2 as part of the Tsunami Books Play Reading Series. The story envisions Robeson’s death-bed recollections, from the Jazz Age to Red Scare-era persecution. The cast featured LCC professor Stanley Coleman as the singer/actor/activist Paul Robeson and included Lane County NAACP President Eric Richardson. Paperback copies of the play are available for purchase at Tsunami Books.

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