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ANIMAL RIGHTS FORCES FOILED IN OREGON LEGISLATURE

Anti-rodeo Senate Bill 613 declared dead

(SALEM, OREGON)-The Oregon Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources announced today it has nixed a public hearing scheduled for Thursday, February 24 on Senate Bill 613. The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS)-backed initiative was aimed at wiping out Oregon's thriving rodeo tradition by banning the roping of livestock. Legislative leaders said the measure also lacked support in the Oregon House of Representatives, and lawmakers will not address SB 613 again this session.

The so-called "horse tripping" bill would have outlawed the archaic practice of roping horses by the legs, causing them to crash violently to the ground. "Tripping" of horses was voluntarily banned by the Charro Rodeo Association in 1995. Some Oregon rodeos, such as the historic Jordan Valley Big Loop Rodeo, still include horse roping among the event lineup. However, strict rules safeguard the horses' welfare, disqualifying contestants who mistreat a horse or cause it to fall.

"No rodeo event in Oregon condones, or conducts, horse tripping. Oregon has comprehensive laws in place to protect animals. This bill was totally unnecessary. It was nothing more than a first step by HSUS to ban all roping of all animals in our state," Dave Duquette, United Horsemen CEO and President, said.

"Horses are livestock, and if this bill had become law, it would have set the precedent for making it illegal to rope a cow. After all, they're both livestock - what's the difference between horses' legs and cows' legs?" he added.

United Horsemen members called, wrote and e-mailed their Oregon Senators to let them know the truth about the misleading bill. They were joined by other SB 613 opponents, including the American Quarter Horse Association, the Oregon Quarter Horse Association, the Professional Rodeo Cowboys' Association, the Pendleton Round-Up and many other rodeo directors, supporters and horsemen from around Oregon and the Northwest.

Duquette emphasized the need to remain vigilant against other HSUS-backed legislation. "The HSUS goal is to gradually pick away at owners' rights to decide what is best for our horses and livestock," Duquette said. "They hide their agenda behind

pretty language about protecting animals. But we are finally starting to educate the public about what is behind the curtain. Oregonians are too smart to fall for the misleading HSUS rhetoric. Those of us who love horses, livestock and the Western lifestyle need to work together to preserve our heritage and the right to decide what is best for our animals."

An excerpt from an email circulated by HSUS' Oregon Director, Scott Beckstead, in response to the news that SB 613 had been killed:

"We will continue to carefully monitor both the Big Loop rodeos in eastern Oregon, as well as the clandestine charro rodeos in other areas... Rest assured this bill will be sponsored again in the next session, and we will not stop trying until we finally get the law passed..."