

POLK COUNTY DEMOCRATS



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: June 26, 2026

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Polk County Democrats Condemn Initiative Petition 28 (IP28), a Proposed Ban on Hunting, Fishing, and Animal Husbandry.

Ballot measure would redefine the legal status of animals, directly impacting farmers, ranchers, anglers, and hunters, and causing significant job losses.

Polk County, Ore., June 25, 2026 — Polk County Democrats have unanimously voted to adopt a Resolution to Oppose Initiative Petition 28 (IP28), known as the “PEACE Act.”

The proposed 2026 Oregon ballot measure would remove existing legal exemptions for hunting, fishing, trapping, and farming from state animal abuse laws. If enacted, it would effectively criminalize these activities by treating the killing or intentional injury of most animals as criminal animal abuse. Fishing, slaughtering livestock, conducting animal research, and even pest control would be effectively banned and classified as crimes if Initiative Petition 28 qualifies for the ballot and is approved by voters. While exemptions would remain for self-defense and veterinary practices, most protections that currently apply to dogs and cats would be extended to vermin, salmon, deer, and cattle.

Oregon’s agricultural industry is far more than a collection of businesses — it is a \$5 billion economic engine that supports more than 80,000 jobs. Yet by criminalizing animal slaughter and standard animal husbandry, IP28 would effectively bring animal agriculture in the state to an end. Processing plants, dairies, and ranches would shut down almost overnight, leaving a vacuum that out-of-state and international producers would quickly move to fill.

The economic fallout of IP 28 to Polk County would be devastating. According to the 2022 USDA Census of Agriculture, Polk County is home to 1,158 farms and ranches, 97% which have been

family-owned for generations, working 154,851 acres and generating \$249.7 million in agricultural sales. Polk County is Oregon's second-largest Christmas tree producer — a nationally significant industry and is one of the state's top wine grape and grass seed counties, ranking 9th in Oregon. It is also home to significant dairy operations with \$29 million in milk sales.

IP 28 would criminalize the dairy practices, poultry operations, and livestock management that generate Polk County's livestock income. It would eliminate hunting on agricultural land and undermine the pest and predator management on which Christmas tree and vineyard operations depend. For a county where agriculture is a multi-hundred-million-dollar industry, this initiative is not a policy debate; it is a direct economic threat.

Failing to consider the substantive legal and economic impacts on Oregon's tribal nations, IP 28 contains no explicit exemption or recognition of the treaty-reserved hunting, fishing, and animal stewardship rights of Oregon's nine federally recognized Tribal Nations, raising serious constitutional concerns and ignoring longstanding federal Indian law, and potentially undermining government-to-government relationships and Tribal sovereignty.

While the responsible treatment of animals is a shared value, this measure goes far beyond preventing cruelty and instead threatens the livelihoods of tens of thousands of Oregonians, the stability of our \$5 billion agricultural sector, and the state's long-term food security. Considering these sweeping implications, the Polk County Democratic party calls for more balanced, practical approaches to animal welfare that do not criminalize essential agricultural, research, and pest-management practices.

We urge voters, community leaders, and policymakers across Oregon, regardless of political affiliation, to closely examine IP28 and its far-reaching economic and social consequences, and to stand with us in strong opposition to IP28.

About the Polk County Democrats

Polk County Democratic Central Committee, known as the Polk County Democrats, support Democratic values and principles through community outreach, voter education, and candidate support. We support Federal, State, and local policies that create a safe, stable, prosperous future for everyone, regardless of age, race, religion, nation of origin, gender, or ability.

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