



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on June 10, 2026

New Oregon Measure Would Criminalize Hunting, Fishing — and Even Standard Mouse Traps

Got a rat problem on your property? Don't worry, under Oregon's new animal-rights act, you'd still be able to deal with it. You'd just have to eliminate the 20, 30, or 40 rats in your yard using live-catch traps. You can then deliver the rodents to, well, whoever's itching to have dozens of pet wild rats.

Alternatively, you could use birth-control bait and wait up to two years for the rodents to pass away from old age.

No, this isn't satire, but what is dictated by Oregon's Initiative 28 (I-28), also known as the "Peace Act." (I.e., People for Elimination of Animal Cruelty Exemptions.) It would, [writes](#) its main sponsor, "extend the same legal protections our companion animals currently have to ... other animals." And, yes, this would disallow hunting and fishing — and more. As Ballotpedia [relates](#):



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The initiative would remove exemptions to animal cruelty laws that currently allow for animal husbandry practices; slaughtering livestock and poultry; animal breeding practices; fishing, hunting, and trapping; wildlife management practices; rodeos; scientific or agricultural research/teaching; control of vermin/nuisance animals. The initiative would criminalize the intentional injury of protected animals, including nonhuman mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and fish. The only exceptions allowed under the initiative for harming or killing a protected animal are self-defense against an immediate threat to yourself, other humans, or other animals, and good veterinary practices defined in state law.

I-28's primary sponsor is a man named David Michelson. A Portland-based animal-rights activist, he describes himself as a former psychologist, public health worker, and vegan. His initiative would, too, turn "nearly one million Oregonians into criminals," [opined](#) PJ Media recently. And it likely will appear on the ballot November 3, for, as the news site also informs:

The organizers needed 117,173 signatures and just crossed that threshold this week [May 29]. The Secretary of State's offices [sic] will verify the signatures to determine how many of those are legitimate.



Cuts a Wide Swath

So who'd be affected by I-28? The Oregon Hunters Association (OHA) [provided](#) the following list:

- Oregon's 330,000+ licensed hunters and their families
- Oregon's 500,000+ licensed anglers
- Oregon's 37,000 farms and ranches employing over 80,000 workers
- Wildlife biologists, trappers, and pest control operators
- Oregon's nine federally recognized Tribes with treaty hunting and fishing rights
- Veterinarians and animal research institutions

This, however, may understate the case. I mean, who wouldn't be affected by I-28? I asked Grok artificial intelligence if, for example, it would allow mosquito spraying. It answered that "spraying for mosquitoes would likely be prohibited if it involves intentionally injuring or killing them."

Presumably then, you'd also be forbidden from swatting even *a* mosquito, a fly, or killing any other insect. And what of roach infestations? Are you supposed to "humanely" trap them, too? Give them birth control?

This hits close to home because I've been tackling a yard-rat infestation for someone close to me. This is in New York City, not Oregon, but it got me thinking about the logistics of I-28 imperatives. The neighbor next door, who has been helping with the eradication, already spent \$750 repairing his vehicle after rats chewed through wires. If we chose the birth-control route, would he have to do this every few months until the rodents naturally expired?

If I humanely trapped them, who in the NYC metropolitan area wants 15 to 40 city rats? Got any leads? (One rat was big enough, as they say in the Bronx, to "trow ya'.") Could I send them to Mr. Michelson's house in Portland?

Respect for Life?

Now, our world has already seen its share of extremist animal-rights efforts. I-28, however, appears uniquely bizarre. Oh, there is the world's first vegetarian city: [Palitana](#), India, a Jain pilgrimage town. In 2014, it banned the sale, purchase, and consumption of meat, fish, and eggs, along with slaughterhouses and related businesses. And Switzerland is the only country with a constitutional provision protecting animals' "dignity" (not just welfare). Yet neither place prohibits pest eradication.

And lest I be misunderstood, I'll say that respect for life is a beautiful thing. I myself avoid killing whenever possible, which includes putting creepy-crawlies (e.g., spiders) outside rather than squashing them. (OK, laugh if you want.) But the anthropomorphizing of animals is something else entirely.

The kicker is that animal-rights activists such as Michelson [are generally pro-abortion](#). So how does any of this make sense?

Oh, the abortion makes sense from the Left's (which includes animal-rights activists) materialistic perspective. For this holds that, bereft of a soul, people are mere organic robots, some pounds of chemicals and water. And there's nothing wrong with terminating a robot's function.

Yet animals would then be in the same category — organic robots and fair game.



Faith Matters

People of faith, of course, view matters differently. We consider man a divinely created being, infused with a soul, who reflects God in possessing intellect and free will. And God has prohibited the [unjust killing of such beings](#). *This* is why murder is wrong.

It's also why killing animals isn't murder, under either man's or moral law.

Of course, we must respect and protect God's creation. This means, among other things, not killing animals frivolously or causing them undue pain. But the reality still remains that children of God and mere creatures of God occupy very different planes.

The atheist/materialist may not see it that way, though. Apropos here, I remember hearing a representative from the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) on the radio decades ago. He was asked: Imagine you're driving down a road. You see an animal on one side and a baby on the other and must swerve to avoid killing one. Which would you save?

He said that he couldn't choose one over the other.

Of course, he could've if he'd used the method I-28's framers apparently employ: emotion-based decision-making. Just doing what feels right explains how a pro-abortion person can be aghast at the killing of a rat.



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