

What About People Who Can't Afford a Fence?

Ambuja Rosen, an animal welfare advocate in Oregon, conducted interviews in her community about how a chaining ban might impact low-income people:

I interviewed Sharon Schreiber, executive director of the Interfaith Care Community, including ICCA. I also interviewed Jessica Martin, administrator and editor of Peace House.

AMBUJA ROSEN: The tethering ordinance would not apply to homeless people, but it will apply to people who rent or own property. Opponents say it will hurt poor people who can't afford to either fence their yards or move to a place that has a fence. Yet I haven't seen you or any other advocates for the poor argue this before City Council. Why are you personally not opposed to this ordinance?

SHARON SCHREIBER: I don't believe the issue of keeping your dog tethered has any bearing on income or economics. I think this is just a moral obligation that we have to act humanely toward all living things.

If people can't afford a fence, they should keep their dogs inside, and take them for walks. I feel it's a crime and inhumane to make any living being stand there tied up for long hours for your own convenience. Some people, for example, chain dogs up to guard the house. We shouldn't make our pets suffer because it makes us feel safer in our environment. This is not an economic issue. It's a matter of the ethics of the individual.

JESSICA MARTIN: When I signed the tethering petition, I was thinking of things through my own perspective. I can't speak for anybody else. However, I make roughly \$700 a month. If I made the decision to have a dog, I would try to take into account the expense of having a pet.

Not only would I factor in shots, food, supplies, etc. but I would also think about creating a space for the dog that would be safe and suitable. I wouldn't get a dog if I weren't able to take care of it financially, or if lived in a place where there wasn't room for the animal and I had to chain him.

I think people can use their creativity and resourcefulness to fence yards cheaply or free. For example, my partner and I built a fence with lumber scraps and other materials we were able to obtain for free in Ashland.

(Sharon and Jessica spoke as individuals only, and not on behalf of their organizations.)