



Adam Lid <adam.lid@lacity.org>

Agenda item #16-1357

1 message

Joy Ronstadt <joy.ronstadt@gmail.com>
To: Adam.Lid@lacity.org

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Joy Ronstadt
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RE: Opposition to agenda item #16-1357

Dear Committee on Personnel and Animal Welfare,

Please include this letter into public record to be included in any hearing, studies, and or reports pertaining to this issue.

Not only do I strongly oppose this motion, but I also find the wording of it disturbing and offensive as a future parent, a current aunt to 3 amazing nieces and nephews, and a professional in the animal industry.

"The use of wild and exotic animals, particularly in circuses, has desensitized generations of people and taught our children that it is perfectly acceptable to treat wild and exotic animals as objects or toys." I would like to know the science behind this statement or would like to know if this is strictly based on the personal opinion of the committee. Personally, I was raised during a time when we as a society knew much less about animal behavior and husbandry than we know now. I went to circuses and zoos. Outreach companies brought animals to my elementary school. If anything, these experiences taught me to appreciate animals more. They did not desensitize me. They made me more sensitive. They made me more curious. My parents were responsible and taught me to respect animals and encouraged me to educate myself about different species, their habitats, and how we as humans are affecting their lives. My parents taught me the great responsibility that comes with caring for animals. Currently, I am doing that with my nieces and nephew (with my brother's blessing) and will do the same thing for my children in the future. I would like my children to be able to experience animals firsthand, and I sadly believe that this committee is going to eventually take that possibility away.

As a professional in the animal industry, this motion causes me great concern for several reasons. The obvious concern being the future impact this motion may have on my livelihood, as well as hundreds of other people's livelihoods. Apart from the obvious reason, the motion also troubles me on a more personal level. The wording paints the majority of us as being solely in it for financial gain without regard to the animals in our care. Do I receive financial compensation for training animals? Yes. Am I rich from doing so? Absolutely not. There are times when I don't even know when I will receive another paycheck, but I still continue to care for the animals 7 days a week without hesitation. I don't have "weekends" or holidays. I have missed family events, friends' weddings, birthday parties, funerals, baby showers, etc... I have had to cancel vacations in order to care for the animals that are my responsibility. We, as animal care givers, sacrifice on a personal level daily for the animals. We live and breathe for the animals under our care. We worry about them constantly and strive to keep them in the best physical AND mental shape possible. It is insulting that anyone would think I or any of my colleagues are solely in this for the money.

Even if you were to push our emotional attachments to the animals aside and look at this strictly as a business, it would be obvious that our greatest concern would be for the animals' health and welfare, because without them, we have no business. An animal that is ill or mistreated will not be able to do the things necessary for our businesses to run. A scared or malnourished animal cannot go to an unfamiliar place and do what is asked of it. We spend months and sometimes years socializing these animals and building trusting relationships with them. Looking at it exclusively as a business venture, it does not make sense to waste all the time and money we spend preparing animals to put them into a dangerous situation for one day of employment. We are more protective and careful with our animals than any governing body will ever be because of the time and effort that we have invested in them.

The wording of this motion is vague to say the least. It leaves too much room for interpretation which can be used to make detrimental amendments in the future. Rather than putting a general ban on the use of exotics for "personal or public entertainment", it seems more appropriate to use legislation that is already in place in regards to the licensing for, the care of, and the treatment of animals to target the "illegitimate" handlers and companies you speak of in this

motion.

I appreciate your taking the time to read my thoughts and hope they will be considered in your decision to push this motion forward or to stop it.

Thank you,
Joy Ronstadt