

Re: L.A. City Council bill sitting on the table titled ""Prohibition on the Exhibit of Wild or Exotic Animals for Entertainment or Amusement" agenda item #16-1357.

PLEASE DO NOT PASS THIS.

I am writing to express OPPOSITION to agenda item #16-1357:

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

My understanding is that this bill is aimed at banning exotic animals for ALL use other than AZA (Association of Zoos and Aquariums) facilities.

This would mean that MANY credible organizations will NOT be able to:

- Host outreach events that reach school children, hospitals, veterans, and/or underprivileged youth.
- Entertaining public with informational shows and/or presentations at their facility.

Moorpark College students are inspired every day through the presentations, outreach, and interactions they have with the public on a daily basis at America's Teaching Zoo, which is a program on its campus. Upon graduating from the Exotic Animal Training and Management program they are looking to become educators, presenters, zookeepers, conservationists, veterinarians, but more importantly to become a bridge between wildlife and the public. With a bill like this in place we will see the END of outreach and wildlife education organizations in L.A. County and that's just the start!

I have personally seen and heard testimony supporting the following difference between a training and performance program such as the one at Moorpark College, compared to a zoo such as the L.A. City Zoo.

1. The teaching zoo accepts for their training program only animals that cannot be returned to the wild, and by giving them daily interaction in captivity, and teaching them things (training), the animals are not bored and have things to focus on, which supports their health and wellbeing.
2. The students learn not only about the animal(s) they work with, but about themselves, because of the consistent interaction and relationship with the animal. It teaches responsibility as well.
3. In Zoos, there is more potential for boredom and depression for the animals, compared with a program like America's Teaching Zoo at Moorpark College.
4. I personally witnessed an orangutan escape at the L.A. Zoo a couple years ago. They are smart, clever animals. It was not the first time they had used tools inside their habitat to unravel the woven cable to create a hole big enough for their smallest member to squeeze through. I believe we would all be better off if we increase interaction and study between animals and humans, aiming to learn and solve issues together. If the orangutans are escaping, keep working to understand their needs and alleviate their boredom. Study what they're good at and what they love to do and give them more of that as well as challenges and problems to solve to keep them busy and motivated. A program like the one at Moorpark College produces graduates who

would be more capable to think this way. If the program is disallowed, we are not making this kind of progress.

In summary, if you need to create a ban, ban harm to animals. Harm defined as anything that a human or an organization willfully does, or allows, that degrades an animal's life, short or long term, that they have responsibility for.

Thank you for considering my testimony and my plea.

Lori Sortino