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Opposition to agenda item #16-1357

1 message

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To: adam.lid@lacity.org, david.ryu@lacity.org, paul.koretz@lacity.org

Opposition to agenda item #16-1357

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

Dear councilmembers,

I am writing to express my opposition to agenda item #16-1357. As a former resident of LA County and an animal professional I request you carefully consider the impact of an ordinance like this one in your cities and counties. While I was a student at Moorpark College in the Exotic Animal Training and Management program we brought animals to underprivileged schools and community organizations. I have included a photo of one such visit. Look at the faces of these children, they are being entertained.....AND educated!

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One visit greatly impacted me as a student going through the program and I will discuss how they impacted the teens that we visited.

Our first visit was to a safe house for teens involved in prostitution. Most of the residents were girls ranging in age from 12 to 16 years old. The organization didn't have the finances to support an educational show with wild and exotic animals so America's Teaching Zoo donated the program. The students brought their animals to the house and for an hour those teens got an exciting reprieve from the literal hell-on-earth that is their daily lives. In addition to learning about animals natural history and inspiring them to care about the extinction these animals are facing, they also met a group of students. Young men and women not too different from them who were getting and education and doing something amazing with it. This ban would inadvertently affect outreach organizations like this from impacting students, children, and teens in this way. This ban would likely also pull resources away from serving teens like the ones who lived at this safe house by directing funding and manpower towards regulating and enforcing ordinances of this nature.

I encourage you to research the regulatory bodies and systems already in place to monitor animal welfare. It's likely these bodies need more funding and support, but not additional ordinances. For instance, in regards to the following, "The City has also seen displays of snakes, reptiles, birds, and non-human primates on the public sidewalk and in parks, where handlers have offered photos with animals in exchange for a monetary donation." Likely these displays are already un-permitted and illegal so enforcement is the real issue. Circuses are regulated by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and required to receive local permitting in order to perform with wild animals. If the goal is to ban circuses, stop issuing circus permits.

As an animal care professional animal welfare is literally my job. Each day I interact directly with hundreds of people trying to inspire them to care about and conserve our planet. It's a real challenge when most people don't know the difference between a tiger and lion. It's also a challenge to convince teenagers who are worried about which backseat they might have to crawl in to next that they should care about plastics entering the ocean.

While it disgusts me to see the condition that some animals are living in and what they are subjected to the problem is with enforcement and resources not lack of law. Thank you for your time and consideration.

LynnLee Schmidt

Curator Birds and Mammals



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