

Opposition to agenda item #16-1357 :

April 13, 2017

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

Dear Committee on Personnel and Animal Welfare,

My name is Jennifer Rios, and after graduating from the Exotic Animal training and management program at Moorpark college in 2002, I began my career training animals for an animal training company that has been supplying animals for the entertainment industry for decades. I stayed at that company for 12 years training mainly dogs and cats-but we also had kangaroos, camels, foxes, porcupines, birds and beavers.

I am now working at another company that provides the same services, and keeps dogs, cats, foxes, prairie dogs, opossums, skunks, ground hogs, coyotes, squirrels, and over a hundred different birds. These animals are also used in productions as well as parties and outreach to young children-to help them learn why they should respect and love animals. It makes it so much easier for children to grow up into kind and considerate adults with compassion for animals, when they can see them with their own eyes-not CGI or cartoons. Real living, breathing creatures.

The legitimate and reputable companies that work within our industry as well as many of the outreach and educational companies all must have over site, licenses and permits in order to legally own and use birds and animals. It is incredibly difficult and expensive to attain many of these permits and licenses and to keep them in place and in good standing. Creating bans that would directly injure companies that are legally providing a service to the entertainment industry as well as our community, is counterproductive to 'helping' animals. A ban would penalize the very people who are doing everything they can to work within the laws. Go after the people who keep animals illegally. Who are not abiding by the laws and do not have the over site. Or the people who show up at parties with illegally kept animals. Or productions that use animal owners who are not licensed or permitted.

Please count me as strongly opposed to this ban.

Thank you,

Jen Rios

Animal Trainer and Teamster-local 399