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In support of Council File 18-0350

1 message

Pooja Rajaram <prajaram@quitam.org>

Mon, Jul 30, 2018 at 5:23 PM

To: David.Hersh@lacity.org

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I write in support of Councilmember Koretz' bill to require that publicly funded housing projects permit tenants to have pets.

1. I am on the advisory board for Voice for the Animals, an animal welfare nonprofit based in Venice. As an organization we have had many people call into our hotline asking for assistance to help them keep their pets when they were forced to move. Many of these people were in the heartbreaking position of having to choose between housing and their beloved pets.

2. I also have been a volunteer attorney at the LAFLA Domestic Violence Clinic for the last 10 years. One of the ways in which abusers exert power and control over their victims is to threaten to harm or neglect the victim's pets. When victims of domestic violence finally get the courage to leave their abuser, it is often fear for what will happen to their pets that causes them to stay in an abusive and physically dangerous situation longer than they otherwise would have. In 2007 and 2008, studies showed that one-third of domestic violence survivors say they hesitated to seek shelter because of their concern for a pet's welfare, and as many as 25 percent report that they've returned to an abusive partner out of concern for their pet. I have had first hand experience in counseling victims of domestic violence and can attest to the fact that concern for the well-being of pets often causes critical delays in victims seeking restraining orders and leaving their abusers. This has led to further physical violence against the victim.

My deepest thanks to Councilmember Koretz for his championing of this bill.

Pooja Rajaram

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