

## Communication from Public

**Name:**

**Date Submitted:** 03/19/2021 12:28 AM

**Council File No:** 20-1575

**Comments for Public Posting:** Save Western Sports!!

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Heather Bloch

**Date Submitted:** 03/19/2021 02:05 PM

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**Comments for Public Posting:** I applaud the Councilmembers' support for the rodeo inhumane implements ban. Many regard the rodeo as a symbol of our country's history. Others, such as myself, see it as animal cruelty in plain sight, packaged as "tradition" and family entertainment. A reminder that rodeo events have strayed far from traditional ranch work. Even back in 1994 Larry McMurtry wrote in his book "Rodeo" that "No one on a working ranch would ever have a reason (or desire) to ride a bull, Brahma or otherwise. No one would ever be required to race a horse around three triangularly placed barrels, an activity that quickly ruins the horse for more productive activity." Working ranchers take great care not to injure their animals. They don't carry out ranching practices with the intention of "beating the clock." Rodeo animals, unlike the eager cowboys and girls who participate voluntarily, are captive performers in the arena. Most of these animals are not aggressive by nature and that explains the reliance on the inhumane implements used - electric prods, flank straps and sharpened spurs. These devices physically enrage and provoke the animals which is key to a bigger and wilder "performance." Two important facts (not opinions) that work against the welfare of animals in rodeos: Fact # 1: Rodeo is big business. The industry generates millions of dollars for its sponsors, advertisers and various city coffers. Fact # 2: The federal Animal Welfare Act exempts rodeos from the protections it provides to animals. Big bucks plus few legal protections for rodeo animals plus self-policing by the industry equals a raw deal for these animals. Rodeo supporters argue that rodeo animals aren't "intentionally" or "purposefully" hurt, however, the nature of this so-called "sport" means that animal injuries, fatalities and suffering are inevitable. Also, to be clear, most animals in the arena, specifically the steers and calves, are not pets or family members. They're anonymous animals, transported from event to event by stock contractors to be ridden, wrestled and roped. There's little interest in the health of these individual animals after they've served their purpose in one arena and moved on to the next. With regards to rodeo, an inherent tension exists between protecting the culture and protecting the animals entrenched in this culture. I was involved in a 9-minute documentary short, "Bucking Tradition" ([www.buckingtradition.com](http://www.buckingtradition.com)) that explores some of the animal

cruelty issues in rodeo. I encourage those with an interest in these matters to take a look. Thank you to the Los Angeles Councilmembers for their forward-looking approach to protecting these animals in the Los Angeles area.