



EMPIRE STATE HUMANE VOTERS **REPORT ON LEGISLATION**

NYC Intro. 1233

Council Members Mendez, Johnson, Palma, Cabrera, Dromm, Koslowitz, Williams, Rodriguez, Rosenthal, Gibson, Torres, Cohen, Levin

POSITION: SUPPORT

ESHV supports the enactment of NYC Intro. 1233 to prohibit the use of wild or exotic animals in circuses and other public entertainment.

Background

The use of wild animals in circuses is inhumane and a serious risk to public safety. Intro. 1233 is needed because current laws do not adequately protect animals and people from the cruelty and safety risks posed by the use of wild animals in circuses and other public performances in New York City.

Animal Cruelty

In the wild elephants do not perform headstands, bears do not balance on balls, and tigers do not jump through rings of fire. Circus animals are forced to perform these unnatural tricks under threat of physical punishment. Numerous undercover investigations have demonstrated widespread use of brutal and abusive training techniques for circus animals including shocking with electric prods, and beatings with metal bars, baseball bats, whips, pitchforks and hooked rods known as bullhooks.¹ Animals may also be drugged or have their teeth or claws surgically removed. When they are not being forced to perform, circus animals endure extensive travel – sometimes 11 months out of the year – in cramped trailers where they are often chained and isolated for long durations and denied exercise and other natural behavioral needs. This unnatural confinement leads to further psychological and physical trauma.

Public Safety

¹ Examples of undercover video footage documenting these abusive training methods is available at Last Chance for Animals, Ban Circus Animals, <http://www.lcanimal.org/index.php/campaigns/elephants/circuses> and Ringling Bros. -Elephant Child Abusers-Breaking A Baby Elephant, YouTube, Jan. 31, 2010, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eDMYEHY6ELs>.



The use of wild animals in circuses poses a serious risk to public safety. Wild animals by nature can act instinctively and unpredictably. Factoring in the additional and chronic stress caused by the abusive training methods and conditions of captivity, there is a high risk that these animals may attempt to attack or escape. Wild animals may also carry serious transmittable diseases and infections, including tuberculosis. Current local, state, and federal law does not adequately protect circus animals from cruelty or protect the public from the dangers posed by these animals. Indeed many of the circuses that routinely perform in NYC have been repeatedly cited for violations of the Animal Welfare Act and have been documented engaging in egregious animal cruelty in undercover video investigations.

Greenburgh, NY, Plattsburgh, NY and Southampton, NY have already enacted local laws to ban the use of wild animals in circuses and a many other states and municipalities in the U.S. and around the globe have enacted done the same. It's time for NYC to prioritize humane treatment of animals and protecting public safety by enacting Intro. 1233.

Impact of the Proposed Legislation

Intro. No. 1233 would add a new section 17-199.1 to the New York City Administrative Code to prohibit performances by wild or exotic animals in New York City. The term “performance” would include any circus, exhibition, public showing, presentation, display, exposition, fair, act, ride, trade show, petting zoo, carnival, parade, race, performance, or similar undertaking in which animals are required to perform tricks, give rides, or participate as accompaniments for the entertainment of a live audience.²

Take Action:

Call your Council Member and ask them to bar inhumane and unsafe wild animal circuses from NYC by voting for Intro. 1233.

Questions:

Contact ESHV Executive Director, Allie Feldman Taylor at allie@eshv.org

Visit us on the web at <https://eshv.org/>

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² Intro. No. 1233 includes exceptions for performances that (i) occur at an accredited non-mobile facility, (ii) are part of an educational or conservation program by an accredited institution or facility (subject to limitations on the animal's travel and performance time), (3) consist of the display of a wild animal as part of a religious ceremony or (4) occur at a research facility registered by the USDA and approved to operate under the NYS Public Health Law section 504.