



# VOTERS FOR ANIMAL RIGHTS

## Queens District Attorney Questionnaire

### **About Us**

Launched in 2017, Voters For Animal Rights is a 501c(4) grassroots multi-issue animal advocacy organization that is building political power for animals. Our mission is to help elect candidates who support animal protection, lobby for stronger laws to stop animal cruelty, and hold elected officials accountable to humane voters.

VFAR mobilizes public concern for animals through the political process. We know that animal protection is not only a moral issue but a bi-partisan political issue as well. Over 90% of Americans believe that animals need protection from abuse and exploitation. To that end, we organize humane voters to support candidates that care about animals. If you support animals, then we want to support you! There are over 60,000 humane voters throughout New York state, hundreds of which are volunteers for VFAR who are ready to knock on doors, make phone calls and get out the vote to elect people that will stand up for animals. We deliver the vote – for the animals and for you!

As an example, here is our [animal-friendly voter guide](#) from the NYC Special Election for Public Advocate.

### **Endorsement Process**

Candidates seeking our endorsement for Queens DA are required to fill out this questionnaire and submit to [woof@vfar.org](mailto:woof@vfar.org) by **Friday, May 24, 2019**. *Please let us know if you need more time.*

### **Questions**

If you have any questions about the topics in our questionnaire, please don't hesitate to reach out. We are happy to help explain NYC animal protection policy recommendations. Email [woof@vfar.org](mailto:woof@vfar.org)

With gratitude,

*Allie Feldman Taylor, Michelle Aptman, Jabari Brisport, Julie Cappiello, Joyce Friedman, Heather Greenhouse, Kathy Nizzari and Scott Taylor*

**Board of Directors, Voters For Animal Rights**

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## Candidate Contact Information & Campaign Information

	Name	Phone	Email
<b>Candidate</b>	Tiffany Cabán	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
<b>Campaign Manager</b>	Luke Hayes	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
<b>Scheduler</b>	Katherine Demby	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

Campaign HQ Address: 72-24 Broadway, Jackson Heights Queens, 11372

### Personal Initiatives

1. Do you feel that promoting the humane treatment of animals should be a priority for the Queens DA?

Yes, absolutely. Animals are a core part of happy, healthy, and stable communities. Humane treatment of animals is a key indicator of our social empathy, which is directly related to how we treat people in the incarceration system. Animals can also help folks cope with day-to-day problems and reduce stress, which is directly related to criminal behavior. Life should be protected.

2. What issues affecting animals in Queens and New York State are you most concerned about?

As a proud mom of two rescue pups, animal cruelty and neglect are extremely concerning to me. I would advocate for more rescue programs and collaborate with animal rights groups to advocate for changes to the way we treat animals.

3. Do you have any achievements to date on humane issues, e.g. supporting humane legislation, adopting a shelter animal, volunteering with an animal rescue or advocacy organization, supporting any national or local animal protection orgs, living a plant-based (vegan or vegetarian) lifestyle, etc.? Did you grow up with any companion animals or currently live with any companion animals?

As mentioned, my family includes two rescue pups. I always had dogs growing up, and I volunteered at Bobbi and the Strays animal rescue in Queens while in Junior High. I support organizations that rescue and facilitate fostering and adoption. One of my dogs has special needs, and I appreciate every day the hard work and love that went into his care before I was able to adopt him.

4. Will you include animal protection among the issues listed on your campaign website?

Yes. Animal protection is community protection. I will advocate for animal rights publicly on my website.

5. Will you commit to having a designated person in your office to serve as a public liaison and handle animal issues?

Yes. Both as part of our plan to hire from our communities and as part of our steering committee. Animal rights are absolutely critical and I will work and advocate against animal cruelty in conjunction with the animal rights community.

6. Would you maintain the [Animal Cruelty Prosecutions Unit](#) established by your predecessor?

Yes. We will make sure the unit has enough resources to hold abusers of animals accountable and protect animal safety. We must treat violence as a public health issue. That includes violence to animals. We must hold wrongdoers accountable and ensure that further harm does not happen.

## **Policy Initiatives**

### **Question 1**

What are examples of animal abuse which you believe should be a focus for the attention of the task force and your office?

Animal cruelty including industrial abuse, companion neglect, abuse or torture, dogfighting, unlawful and reckless breeding of animals, and unlawful possession, hunting or abuse of protected species are all key areas where a DA can have power to protect and save animal lives. Animals must be treated with dignity and compassion.

### **Question 2**

What is the appropriate law enforcement and punitive response to cruelty to companion animals such as domestic torture or violence, dog fighting, tethering, abandonment of dogs in hot cars and cold weather, and other neglect?

The answer may not always be incarceration. I would bring the public defense approach to these situations - first ask how do we prevent the harm from happening again, and then ask how do we make these animals and our communities safer in actuality. In cases of serious abuse and a pattern of intentional wrongdoing, separation may be necessary; more often, I would pursue programs to educate on the wrongs of animal harm, and try to reduce harm in a way that is not biased across race or class.

### **Question 3**

What does a restorative justice approach to animal abuse look like?

The approach will vary from case to case. Frequently it will involve multiple and sustained discussions with impacted groups and advocates, a process of restitution to the degree possible, and an empathetic treatment-oriented approach that seeks to address the root problems that led to the abuse.

### **Question 4**

Would you seek to enforce animal cruelty laws that pertain to live markets and other enterprises which commoditize animals, such as failing to provide animals food and water, adequate space, or leaving animals outside in extreme weather (i.e. heat or freezing weather)?

Yes. Animals deserve respect, dignity and compassion. Animals feel pain, they hunger, they love – how we treat animals reflects on us. I will work with advocates to identify patterns of abuse and wrongdoing, and hold animal abusers accountable so that every part of our society is treated with love.

### **Question 5**

**Part A:** New York State's Animal Cruelty Statute (Article 26 of the New York Agriculture and Markets Law) prohibits acts that cause "unjustifiable physical pain, suffering or death" to animals. Yet, New York's animal cruelty laws have rarely been enforced in cases beyond abuse of domestic and companion animals.

VFAR believes the practices listed below may be considered unlawful under New York's animal cruelty laws and can be prosecuted, however, rarely are these violations of the animal cruelty statutes taken into consideration by District Attorneys. Please place a checkmark next to any of the practices you believe are prohibited and would seek to investigate or prosecute under current New York Law:

- [Castration of pigs, cows, and other mammals without painkillers](#)
- ["Debeaking" or "beak cutting" of chickens and turkeys without painkillers](#)
- [Confinement of egg-laying hens in battery cages](#)
- [Confinement of baby cows in veal crates](#)
- [Force-feeding of ducks or geese for foie gras production](#)
- [Boiling lobsters and other crustaceans while alive](#)
- [Confinement of pigs in gestation crates](#)

**Part B:** Would you support and assist efforts to expand the District Attorneys Association of the State of New York [Animal Cruelty Task Force](#) to include those animals that you checked above? If not, are there other examples of animal abuse which you believe should be a focus for the attention of the task force and your office?

Yes, I will support the efforts of the Animal Cruelty Task Force. I will strongly advocate for DAASNY to expand this unit, and will create an alternative structure to DAASNY that highlights the importance of highlighting abuse like this accountable.

**Part C:** For any of the practices you identified as prohibited in your answer in Part A, above, will you seek to enforce animal cruelty laws against and prosecute companies and business-owners that cause such cruelty to occur? If not, why not?

Yes. They are the main bad actors in these situations, frequently, and should be held accountable for causing widespread harm to animals.

**Question 6:**

Many meat, dairy, and egg products marketed as “natural” and often advertised on products displaying happy animals on non-industrial farms are produced through standard industrial farming practices including the life-long indoor confinement of animals; mutilations (e.g., castration, debeaking, dehorning etc.); and the widespread use of antibiotics and other pharmaceuticals.

Do you believe that reasonable consumers are likely to be misled by the marketing of products produced through standard industrial farming practices as “natural”? If so, will you bring enforcement actions against companies that misleadingly market their products as “natural” under New York General Business Law § 349 and/or § 350, or any other statute which prohibits deceptive practices and false advertising? If not, why not?

Yes, I do believe that this advertising is intentionally and wrongfully misleading. Much like the tobacco litigation of the 90s, we can pursue cases holding people who harm our families through false advertising or antibiotic or hormone abuse. These industries feed us and we rely on them for basic needs - they owe us a standard of care that does not mislead consumers on the health, safety or background of the food.

**Question 7:** In 2018, Judge Eugene M. Fahey of the New York Court of Appeals issued an opinion regarding the rights of animals, stating:

To treat a chimpanzee as if he or she had no right to liberty protected by habeas corpus is to regard the chimpanzee as entirely lacking independent worth, as a mere resource for human use, a thing the value of which consists exclusively in its usefulness to others.... While it may be arguable that a chimpanzee is not a “person,” there is no doubt that it is not merely a thing. *Matter of Nonhuman Rights Project, Inc. v Lavery*, 31 NY3d 1054, 1058 (2018), *concur*

What animals do you believe have a legal right to be free from confinement under the law of New York State?

I agree that chimpanzees have a liberty interest. I do not agree with species-based distinctions on consciousness or personhood; there is substantial evidence pointing to the ability of multiple non-human species to exhibit reason, anticipation, pain, joy, or sorrow over incarceration. We should not be keeping intelligent species in cages, including primates, dolphins, whales, or other living things that evidence suggests suffer deleterious effects from being put in a cage.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'V' or 'W' shape followed by a long horizontal line.

5/24/19

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**CANDIDATE SIGNATURE**

**DATE**