



**VOTERS FOR
ANIMAL RIGHTS**

786 Jefferson Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11221
vfar.org

2020 New York State Senate & Assembly Election Questionnaire

About Us

Launched in 2017, Voters For Animal Rights (VFAR) is a New York based 501c(4) grassroots multi-issue animal advocacy organization that is building political power for animals. In 2019, VFAR led the successful campaign to ban foie gras in NYC, and to stop wild bird poaching. We also led the campaign to ban the use of wild animals in circuses in NYC. We look forward to working with you to win more victories for animals and make the state of New York a leader in compassionate public policy.

Our mission is to 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 who 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 2019 NYC Special Election for Public Advocate.

Endorsement Process

Candidates seeking our endorsement for the New York State Assembly and Senate are **required** to fill out this questionnaire and submit to woof@vfar.org by **June 1, 2020**. *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 to allie@vfar.org and david@vfar.org. We are happy to help you better understand animal protection policy, and we're happy to advise your campaign.

Allie Feldman Taylor, David Karopkin, Esq., Julie Cappiello, Joyce Friedman, Heather Greenhouse, Kathy Nizzari, Michelle Aptman, Stewart Mitchell

Board of Directors, Voters For Animal Rights



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Candidate Contact Information & Campaign Information

Candidate Name Linda B. Rosenthal Pronouns she/her Cell Phone [REDACTED] Email [REDACTED]

Campaign Manager Lauren Schuster Pronouns she/her Cell Phone [REDACTED] Email [REDACTED]

District 67

Party D/WF

Office Sought NYS Assembly

Name of Campaign Committee Linda Rosenthal for Assembly

Campaign Field Office Address N/A

Campaign Website N/A

Personal Initiatives

1. Do you feel that promoting the humane treatment of animals should be a priority for the New York State Legislature?

I have been working to promote animal welfare issues in the New York State Assembly since my election in 2006. I remember the first piece of animal legislation I worked on when I got to Albany, which is now law – the bill to extend orders of protection to include companion animals, who often suffer abuse and neglect in domestic violence situations. It was a vitally important piece of legislation – as we know, animals often suffer heinous abuse at the hands of domestic abusers who use the threat of violence or actual violence against beloved pets to intimidate and coerce their victims. I was approached by a group of advocates who told me that I should be working on “people’s issues.”

I remain as shocked now, more than 10 years later, as I was then by this statement. In a just and humane society, all living beings are treated with compassion and are entitled to protection under the law. Working to protect animals against abuse does not inhibit one’s ability to protect people from harm. In fact, it expands our capacity for compassion and empathy for all sentient beings and makes us, and the Legislature as a whole, better.

The law regards animals as property and compensates “owners” for harm to animals as it would for damage to a couch or a car. All sentient beings capable of feeling both love and pain have an innate right to be protected against harm and suffering, and it is our responsibility as legislators and people to ensure that the law vigorously protects all animals from abuse by humans.



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

I am a vegetarian and have two rescue cats, Kitty and Vida, who I adopted from ACC. In my 14 years as a New York State Assemblymember, I have passed into law 22 bills to protect animals and am the sponsor of about 60 additional pieces of legislation that will improve the lives of all animals. Last year, after a five-year-long battle, I was beyond elated when my bill to ban cat declawing was signed into law, conferring “first in nation” status to New York State. New York should be a national leader on animal welfare, and I will continue introducing and passing legislation to protect animals until we are.

3. What animal issues will you prioritize and lead on as a member of the NYS legislature?

1. Ending the pet store to puppy mill pipeline by banning the sale of dogs, cats and rabbits in pet stores statewide and allowing shops to use the space to show adoptable animals.
2. Moving crimes against animals into New York’s penal law and updating the crimes.
3. Ending cruel and inhumane acts in rodeos.
4. Shutting down New York’s 80+ dangerous live markets and preventing unnecessary cruelty to animals and potentially the next zoonotic disease.
5. Stopping inhumane school-based chick hatching projects.
6. Expanding the beagle freedom law I passed in 2016 to ensure that beagles who had been used in research can be more easily adopted out into loving homes.
7. Creating a statewide animal cruelty database to ensure that people who have cruelty convictions cannot adopt animals or work in animal shelters or rescues.
8. Ending the sale of cosmetics that were tested on animals.
9. Banning the production of new fur products in New York and expanding the state sales tax exemption for fur-bearing articles of clothing to include accessories.
10. Including wildlife in New York’s felony animal cruelty law.
11. Many more initiatives!

4. Will you commit to having a designated person in your office to handle animal issues?

Every staff person who works on legislation in my office works on animal issues.

5. How would you work to empower the animal advocacy community to reach new success and growth into the 2020-2022 term, and ensure that New York is on the forefront of animal protection?



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In addition to the bills I sponsor and will work to pass, I will continue to work to raise awareness among my colleagues and the public about the importance of animal welfare issues. I am the sponsor of legislation to require humane education in elementary and secondary schools because children who learn the importance of kindness to animals grow up to be adults who treat all vulnerable people and beings with compassion.

Positions on Legislation and Policy

1. Companion Animals: Pet Stores

With thousands of homeless animals waiting for loving forever homes in shelters and rescues all over New York State, why should pet stores and breeders be allowed to profit off the backs of animals? The puppy and kitten mill/pet store connection create lives of misery from beginning to end. Breeding facilities and pet stores have repeatedly been found to have poor sanitation, infectious disease, animals overcrowded in cages with no exercise, lack of proper veterinary care, lack of protection from harsh weather conditions, and lack of adequate food and water. These conditions result in great suffering, and many sick animals are sold to unaware consumers. [More info here.](#)

Would you cosponsor and vote for [S4234A/A6298A](#) (Gianaris / Rosenthal) which would ban the sale of dogs, cats and rabbits in pet stores unless they come from a shelter or rescue?

YES / NO YES

Additional Comments: I am the prime sponsor of this legislation along with State Senator Mike Gianaris, and I commit to working around the clock to see it become law.

2. Animals Used for Fashion: Fur

Fur farms breed and confine animals in tiny, filthy cages where they suffer intense stress and unimaginable cruelty. They are beaten, bludgeoned, electrocuted, and skinned alive. Trapping animals in the wild is no better — animals are trapped in cruel leg hold traps where they can suffer for days in excruciating pain — starving, until a trapper returns to shoot or bludgeon them to death. Coyotes are known to attempt to chew off their own legs trying to break free. Many other animals are unintentionally caught and killed in these traps, including household pets. California has enacted a ban on the sale of fur. Several countries such as Norway, Croatia, Czech Republic, Germany, Japan, and the U.K. have taken steps to close fur farms. With public awareness and innovative alternatives on the rise, many popular designers have stopped using all animal fur. There are ethical alternatives to fur which are not only stylish and warm but environmentally friendly. More info [here](#).

Would you cosponsor and vote for [A5040A](#) (Rosenthal), that would ban the sale of new apparel products using real animal fur?

YES / NO YES

Additional Comments: I am the prime sponsor of this legislation.



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3. Animals Used in Entertainment

A. Rodeo Cruelty

While New York State has limited the use of animals in circuses and other entertainment, rodeos have been left unregulated despite the display of similar, and in many cases more egregious, acts of cruelty. Rodeos typically include an event called "calf roping" where [baby calves are shocked with electric prods](#), forcing them to run as soon as the holding chute opens, only to be "clotheslined" with a rope and tied at the legs. Panicked calves are routinely injured or killed during these performances. Rodeos also continue to use flank straps or bucking straps, which are tightly fastened around the animal's abdomen and may be used with sharp-ened spurs to cause pain to the animal, encouraging them to buck more violently. Rodeos are responsible for causing death or serious injury to countless animals, all for the sole purpose of entertainment and showmanship.

Would you cosponsor and vote for [A8554/S7971](#) (Rosenthal/Addabbo) which would prohibit these practices at rodeos?

YES / NO YES

Additional Comments: I am the prime sponsor of this legislation. There are very few silver linings emanating from the COVID-19 pandemic, but one such small silver lining is the fact that the rodeo planned for June 2020 at Madison Square Garden was canceled, as were other smaller rodeo events statewide. We are likely not to be so lucky next time around, so it is vital that we work together to move this bill.

B. Animal Circuses

Circuses that use animals have been cited as a source of cruelty and exploitation for animals. Even if the basic levels of care and protection that the federal Animal Welfare Act demands are met, circuses force wild animals to languish in cages while travelling from performance to performance, without ever having the opportunity to exercise natural behaviors. Worse, time after time we see reports of [circus animals being beaten and whipped](#), having their limbs tied together to facilitate training, being shocked to ensure compliance, not being provided with adequate food, water and shelter, and other instances of cruelty.

Would you cosponsor and vote for [A3673/S5408](#) (Englebright/Martinez) which would prohibit the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation from issuing permits or licenses that would authorize wild animals to appear in circuses?

YES / NO YES I am a cosponsor of this legislation.

C. Carriage Horses



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Advocates have long called out the poor working and living conditions for horses used for NYC carriage rides. As recently as March 2020, a 12-year-old horse was euthanized after [collapsing in Central Park](#), a tragic incident that was captured on video camera by a horrified pedestrian. Despite improvements implemented over the years, these horses are still forced to travel through NYC traffic to get to and from Central Park, they work long days sometimes in extreme weather conditions, with no opportunity for daily turnout. Over the course of the past three decades, there have been countless incidents and accidents involving New York City carriage horses and many have died on the streets of NYC or been sent to slaughter once they are unable to continue working.

***Would you cosponsor and vote for legislation to ban horse carriages in New York City?
YES / NO YES***

Additional Comments: In 2011 I introduced legislation (A01002) to ban the use of horse-drawn carriages in New York City.

4. Animals Used for Experimentation: School Hatching Projects

Principals and school teachers should end the use of bird-hatching projects and replace them with learning activities that teach life processes without the use of live animals. School classroom incubation and hatching projects of baby chicks and ducks is cruel and leads to the abandonment and death of countless young birds each year. Once the eggs develop and the cute baby birds grow up, schools realize that they have no plan for the adult birds. These hatching-project birds are deprived of a mother hen. The birds are often abandoned in city parks where they cannot survive on their own or dumped at local animal shelters and rescues who are already overburdened with unwanted animals. Hatching projects encourage the view that animals are disposable objects instead of living creatures requiring a lifetime of care and commitment. Humane alternatives have been developed by the United Federation of Teachers (UFT), HEART, and humane educators. More info can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

For Assembly candidates: Would you cosponsor and vote [A00058](#) (Rosenthal) that would prohibit schools from using eggs, live baby chickens and ducks for classroom projects?

For Senate candidates: Would you introduce or cosponsor legislation a senate version of A0058 that would prohibit schools from using eggs, live baby chickens and ducks for classroom projects?

YES / NO YES I am the prime sponsor of this legislation, and have identified a senate sponsor.

Additional Comments:



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5. Factory Farms, Live Animal Slaughter Markets and Transportation

There are more than [600 factory farms](#) in New York State, confining animals and engaging in heinously cruel practices such as 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, and confinement of pigs in gestation crates. These factory farms are degrading the environment and poisoning our communities.

There are also [80+ slaughterhouses and live animal markets in NYC](#), in all five boroughs – more than any other U.S. city. These facilities in New York are no different than the live animal markets abroad where coronavirus started. In addition to brutally cruel treatment of the animals (tiny cages, no vet care, severely limited food and water), these storefront facilities pose a significant health and safety hazard to the community affecting the quality of life for neighborhood residents. Blood, feces, urine, dismembered body parts, and feathers are routinely found on our public sidewalks and streets due to the unsanitary conditions associated with storefront slaughterhouses. They are also a breeding ground for infectious diseases — avian flu has been found in many NYC live animal markets. Many of these slaughterhouses are located close to schools and playgrounds. Additionally, when large animals such as cows, bulls, and goats escape (as routinely happens), including during transport, it puts us all in danger, even causing a [multi-hour traffic jam on the Verrazano Bridge](#). Sometimes these animals are allowed to be rescued by a farm animal sanctuary but most often they are killed.

Especially in light of pandemics that originate from crowded, unsanitary live animal markets, would you support a permanent ban on the operation of all factory farms? Would you support legislation [A10399/S8291](#) (Rosenthal/Sepulveda) that would ban the operation of live animal markets in New York City?

YES / NO YES

Additional Comments: Passing this legislation is among my top priorities for the upcoming legislative session. It is vital that we stop the unnecessary cruelty to animals and protect the public against the spread of disease.

Would you cosponsor and vote for legislation to ban confining animals and other cruel practices such as (a) castration of pigs, cows, and other mammals without painkillers, (b) “debeaking” or “beak cutting” of chickens and turkeys without painkillers, (c) confinement of egg-laying hens in battery cages, confinement of baby cows in veal crates, and (d) confinement of pigs in gestation crates?

YES / NO Yes

Additional Comments: I am the sponsor of legislation to ban the use of gestation crates and the confinement of egg-laying hens. I will be introducing legislation to address painful medical procedures performed on animals without painkiller.



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[S6252/A8009](#) (Gianaris/Weprin) is legislation that would renew the state moratorium prohibiting new licenses for slaughter facilities in NYC. It has passed both houses. Will you reach out to Governor Cuomo and ask him to sign the bill?

YES / NO YES

Additional Comments: This bill was just signed into law by the Governor.

Would you cosponsor, support and vote for legislation to require that any animal who escapes a slaughterhouse or transport vehicle be released to an animal sanctuary or other rescue?

YES / NO YES

Additional Comments:

6. Food and Health

A. Dairy Subsidies and transition to plant-based suppliers in New York State

Milk and other dairy products are top agricultural products in New York State, but demand for and sales of dairy products in the U.S. have dropped precipitously in recent years, while sales of non-dairy milks have grown substantially. This change comes as more research and information illuminate the harmful effects of dairy on adult and children's health, the environment and animal welfare. Regardless, the quality of individual animal care offered by a given farm, dairy production necessarily involves farmers taking newborn calves from their mothers, who bellow and chase after them. Instead of a mother's milk going to her babies, her calves are taken to veal farms where they are kept isolated in small plastic huts in rows upon rows. Perhaps worst is that forcibly impregnating, tail docking, and beating downed cows are standard practices on NY dairy farms. Former dairy companies like long-time New York producers like Elmhurst Dairy are making the switch to non-dairy products. New York based companies offering healthy food, yet every year taxpayers subsidize New York's dairies with as much as \$60 million in credits.

Would you support ending or reducing the immense subsidies that New York provides dairy farmers, and reallocating them to plant-based initiatives?

YES / NO

Additional Comments: I would like to hasten the transition from dairy-based milk products with subsidies to encourage the development of plant-based food products. At the same time, we must support dairy farmers in transitioning their production to meet the needs of the new and emerging market.

B. Food Labeling



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Would you support legislation to require that any food products sold in New York must be labeled with information detailing the sourcing of the animals and the conditions the animals were raised in and requiring restaurants provide such signage?

YES / NO YES

Additional Comments:

7. Protecting New York's Wildlife

A. Wildlife Killing Contests

Animal killing competitions are publicly held contests where the person or team who has killed the most animals, or the heaviest or largest animals is crowned the winner. In animal killing competitions, individuals compete to kill the most animals, the heaviest animal, or the largest animal. [Competitions such as these are inhumane and provide incentive to killing animals for glory, prizes or titles.](#) In many cases, these competitions are conducted in a party-like atmosphere and are more like slaughters or massacres and are unsportsmanlike. These competitions are considered cruel by many hunters.

Would you cosponsor and vote for [A9775/S4253B](#) (Glick/Martinez) and [A722B/S7542/A722B](#) (Martinez/Serrano) to ban killing contests in New York State?

YES / NO YES

Additional Comments: I am a cosponsor of both bills. I am the sponsor of bill A600 to ban the state's participation in any pheasant propagation program. Currently the state funds a farm where thousands of pheasants are bred in order to provide people with pheasants to hunt and kill.

B. Wildlife Management

New York is home to an immense diversity of wildlife, whether in urban, suburban or rural areas. Even New York City's five boroughs are home to hundreds of species, including geese, deer, squirrels, ducks, raccoons, opossum, coyotes, hawks, eagles, whales, dolphins, seals, turkeys, beavers, bats, pigeons, rats, migratory birds, and so many more species. While many animals inhabit New York year-round, other species pass through on their annual migrations. USDA Wildlife Services is a federal agency notorious for exterminating millions of wild animals across the country in cruel manners, while ignoring and undermining humane approaches to coexisting with wildlife in New York. Examples of humane wildlife management practices include: Instead of killing Canada geese to reduce the threat of "bird strikes", nests are now being treated as a birth control method. In Staten Island, a deer vasectomy program was instituted as a more humane and effective approach to stabilizing the population, and turkeys were relocated to a sanctuary in upstate New York to avoid being slaughtered.



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Do you support New York City's [WildlifeNYC program](#), aimed to promote awareness, tolerance, coexistence, and understanding of urban wildlife? If you don't represent NYC, would you support a similar program for your district? How do you view our relationship to wildlife in New York State?

YES / NO YES

Additional Comments:



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In 2014, the New York State Department of Environmental Protection (DEC) declared, with no public input in support, and no clear scientific basis, that mute swans are an invasive species in New York, and soon thereafter proposed eliminating all mute swans in New York.

Would you support legislation reversing the New York State DEC's determination that mute swans are an invasive and prohibited species in New York, and allow mute swans to continue to exist?

YES / NO YES

Additional Comments:

Do you oppose lethal management initiatives for "nuisance" wildlife such as Canada geese, deer and turkey populations that result in the cruel and needless killing of these animals in New York's parks by government contractors particularly where there are demonstrated non-lethal and humane alternatives that can be applied?

YES / NO YES

Additional Comments: I am the sponsor of legislation to remove language in environmental conservation law that allows so-called nuisance wildlife to be taken "in any manner" and to require employees of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to maintain a list of the means by which "nuisance" wildlife are taken.

Currently there are few brick and mortar wildlife rehabilitation centers in New York State, such as the Wild Bird Fund in Manhattan. Would you support funding initiatives to expand New York State's capacity for wildlife rescue and rehabilitation?

YES / NO YES

Comments: The Wild Bird Fund is sadly just a few short blocks outside of my district, but I am a long-time supporter of their work and support funding initiatives to expand New York State's capacity for wildlife rescue and rehabilitation.



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8. Legal Rights for Animals

In 2018, in a decision denying a habeas corpus claim brought on behalf of [two chimpanzees who had been kept for decades in small cages in a warehouse](#), Justice Eugene M. Fahey of the New York Court of Appeals issued a concurring opinion stating the following:

“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.

Do you believe that any animals should have an individual legal right to bodily liberty, and if so, would you support legislation that establishes such a right?

YES / NO Yes.

Additional Comments: Every bill I introduce is designed to achieve this goal, and I am working on legislation to clearly establish and enshrine this right in New York State law.

CANDIDATE SIGNATURE

DATE