

## 2021 New York City Council Candidate 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 2020, VFAR helped elect our former board member, Jabari Brisport, to the New York State Senate. In 2019, VFAR led the successful campaign to ban foie gras in NYC, to stop wild bird poaching and to establish an Office of Animal Welfare within the Mayor's Office. In 2017 we 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 New York City a leader in compassionate public policy.

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 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 2020 NYS General Elections.

### **Endorsement Process**

Candidates seeking VFAR's endorsement for the 2021 New York City Council primary elections are required to fill out this questionnaire, which will be posted on our website. Submit to [woof@vfar.org](mailto:woof@vfar.org) by **January 15, 2021**. 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 Feldman Taylor, [allie@vfar.org](mailto:allie@vfar.org) and David Karopkin, [david@vfar.org](mailto:david@vfar.org). We are happy to help you better understand animal protection policy, and we're happy to advise your campaign.

### **Candidate Contact Information & Campaign Information**

Candidate Name Gale A Brewer      Pronouns she/her      Cell Phone [REDACTED]  
Email [REDACTED]

Campaign Manager Daniel Lander      Pronouns he/him      Cell Phone [REDACTED]  
Email [REDACTED]

District # 6      Borough Manhattan

Neighborhoods In Your District Clinton/Hell's Kitchen, Upper West Side

Party Democrat Office Sought City Council District 6

Incumbent/Challenger/Open Seat: Open Seat

Name of Campaign Committee: Friends of Gale Brewer 2021

Campaign Field Office Address: 29 West 95 Street, NY NY 10025

Campaign Website: [www.galebrewer.nyc](http://www.galebrewer.nyc)

Social Media Handles (Facebook/Twitter/Instagram):  
galebrewerNYC/@galebrewerNYC/galebrewernyc

Occupation or Employer: Manhattan Borough President/Elected Official

Organizational Affiliations (if any): Eleanor's Legacy (on leave due to campaign)

Endorsements (if any):

**Council 2021 Endorsements as of June 11, 2021 (Gale Brewer)**

### **Democratic Clubs**

Three Parks Independent Democrats

Broadway Dems

West Side Dems

504 Dems

Stonewall Democrats of NYC

### **Organizations**

Tenants PAC

Met Council Action

American Institute of Architects New York

National Institute for Reproductive Health Action Fund PAC (NIRHAF PAC)

Planned Parenthood of Greater NY Votes PAC

NY League of Conservation Voters

The Jewish Vote / Jews For Racial and Economic Justice

NASW-NYC PACE (National Association of Social Workers)

League of Independent Theaters (Rank #2)

700 Strong

Reliance PAC  
Auxiliary Police Benevolent Association of the City of New York Inc.  
NOW-NYC  
Our Revolution  
Citizens Union-Preferred Candidate

**Unions:**

New York Central Labor Council  
Labor Strong  
SEIU 32BJ  
Communication Workers of America District 1  
District Council 37  
Hotel Trades Council  
NYS Nurses Association

Local 1549, DC37  
Theatrical Stage Employees Local One I.A.T.S.E.  
Teamsters Local 237  
Allied Printing Trades Council  
Transit Workers Union Local 100  
Local 802 AFM  
United Federation of Teachers/UFT  
Professional Staff Congress-CUNY  
Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union/RWDSU  
United Auto Workers/UAW CAP  
Council of Schools Supervisors & Administrators/CSA  
United Fire Officers Association  
Uniformed Firefighters Association  
Committee of Interns and Residents/CIR/SEIU  
LiUNA-NY (NYS Laborers & the Mason Tenders' District Council Pacs)  
Unite Here Local 100  
NYC District Council of Carpenters  
NYC IUOE International Union of Operating Engineers/New York City Coalition  
(Local 14, Local 15, Local 30, Local 94, Local 211, Local 891)

Home Healthcare Workers of America/HHWA; United Service Workers Union/USWU; and The International Union of Journeymen and Allied Trades/IUJAT

United Service Workers Union (USWU)

Alliance of South Asian American Labor/ASAAL

1199 SEIU

Doctor's Council SEIU

Bricklayers & Allied Craftworkers Local 1 NY

Tile Marble and Terrazzo Local 7 NY-NJ

Local 3 International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

**Elected Officials:**

Hon. Jerrold Nadler, Member of Congress

Hon. Adriano Espaillat, Member of Congress

Hon. Ruth W. Messinger, Former Manhattan Borough President

Hon. Jumaane Williams, Public Advocate

Hon. Richard Gottfried, Assembly Member

Hon. Linda Rosenthal, Assembly Member

Hon. Keith L.T. Wright, Chair, New York County Democratic Party

Hon. David Paterson, Former Governor of New York State

Hon. Jose Serrano, NYS Senator

Hon. Robert Jackson, NYS Senator

Hon. Liz Krueger, NYS Senator

NYCHA Leaders: Endorsements of a coalition of tenant leaders who collectively represent every NYCHA housing development in District 6:

- Venus Pereles, Tenant Association President, Wise Rehab
- Patricia Ryan, Tenant Association President, Amsterdam Addition
- Mary Beyerbach, Tenant Association President, Sondra Thomas Apartments
- Alice Fox, Former Tenant Association President, Sondra Thomas Apartments
- Ernesto Carrera, Tenant Association President, Wise Towers
- Polly Spain, Former Tenant Association President, WSUR Site A- 129 West 94th Street

- Mona Lisa Lopez, Tenant Association President, Domesite 154 W 84th Street
- Jac Chandross, Former Tenant Association President, WSUR Site B 74 W 92 Street
- Starrlynn Fikaris, Tenant Association President, WSUR Site C
- Maria Guzman, Tenant Association President, Harborview Terrace
- Margarita Osorio, Tenant Association President, Amsterdam Houses
- Ramona Minor, Tenant Association President, De Hostos Apartments
- Cynthia Tibbs, Tenant Association President, WSUR (Brownstones)
- Aimee Bookman, Tenant Association President, Douglass Rehab
- Patricia Forrest, Former Tenant Association President, ReHab Wise Towers

### **Personal Initiatives**

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

2. What achievements or advocacy for animals are you most proud of, 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 grew up in a family that loved dogs that lived as part of the family. I have funded capital needs for ACC for many years. When a puppy mill moved into a storefront near my Council District Office, we organized to evict the operators. Ironically, that space and adjacent storefronts is now the Wild Bird Fund and I was instrumental in helping them to get the space. As Borough President, I have pressured the Dept of Homeless Services to allow those who are homeless and seeking Safe Haven beds or shelter to bring their dog with them. The non-profits working with the homeless community and allowing the companion animal to join in the housing are now getting more interest from the street homeless because of this new policy. For 20 years as an elected official, I have advocated for and funded many dog runs in parks, and kept an eye on their condition, maintenance, and listened to the concerns of dog owners about the role of the dog runs and their importance for animal health. I advocated for the 9-9 rule when the City wanted to eliminate it. The gatherings – am and pm – of owners and their dogs have proven to be valuable for socialization as well as safety in the park.

3. What animal issues will you prioritize and lead on as a member of the New York City Council? How would you work to empower the animal advocacy community to reach new success and growth into the 2022-2025 term, and ensure that New York is on the forefront of animal protection?

-To empower animal advocacy, I would support closer collaboration between the advocates for plant-based diets and the animal advocates to implement a program of education about the

importance of reduced animal product in our diet which would improve human health and limit the scale of animal abuse required now to supply society with animal products.

-As our climate warms, I think city residents could be increasingly exposed to diseases. The use of pesticides to control insect pests that carry diseases should not be scaled up to meet that threat. These pesticides are harmful to humans and wildlife including birds, valuable insects, and aquatic animals. I will fight for a reduction in pesticide use and the increased use of non-toxic remediation.

-I would continue my support for the programs of the Harbor School with a focus on the ecological restoration of our harbor and estuary ecosystems to restore aquatic life and help sustain the wildlife that depends on the health of that ecosystem. In this area, education is key.

4. Do you have, or would you consider developing, a platform on animal protection issues and posting the information onto your campaign website to outline your positions? If you receive an endorsement from VFAR, will you promote our endorsement on your website and social media pages? Yes. I will promote any support from VFAR. I always have in the past.

5. Will you commit to designating a member of your staff to handle animal issues? Yes.

6. Do you believe that the pursuit of animal rights is part of a broader vision of social justice? Please explain your answer.

Yes, animal rights are part of a broad version of social justice. As noted above, the restrictions on the companion animals of the homeless teaches us that when one group suffers a profound social injustice such as homelessness other forms of discrimination arise. We have seen during Covid-19 how the adoption of pets dramatically increased and many of those pets were rescues. The abuse and abandonment of animals has taught us that social justice and justice for animals are tied together by cultural and economic circumstances, and the preservation of animal life is a litmus for our capacity to show compassion to all forms of life.

## **Positions on Legislation and Policy**

### **1. New York City's Companion Animals**

#### **A. Increased Funding for ACC and Independent Animal Rescue Organizations**

Animal Care Centers of NYC (ACC) is a non-profit organization contracted with the New York City Department of Health to manage New York City's three full-service municipal animal shelters located in Manhattan, Brooklyn and Staten Island, as well as two admissions centers located in the Bronx and Queens. ACC is an open admission shelter required by law to accept every animal brought through its doors and cannot turn away any animal like most other shelters, whether arriving due to homelessness, family crisis, abuse, or abandonment. ACC relies on public funding for operational costs necessary to save and find homes for these

animals in need, but resources are needed to ensure that these facilities always have sufficient capacity, staff and other resources to increase adoptions, perform spay and neuter operations, provide pet retention services and other efforts to ensure a successful and humane NYC shelter system.

**Do you pledge to allocate funding to maintain ACC and other non-profit animal rescue organizations?**

**YES / NO Yes.**

Additional Comments: I have allocated capital funding to ACC for many years and if elected I will continue to do so and ensure that my colleagues recognize the importance of that funding.

## **B. Trap Neuter and Release (TNR) of feral cats**

Tens of thousands of stray and feral cats, collectively called community cats, live in the outdoor spaces of New York City. They live in groups called colonies, and they establish themselves near human activity — in backyards, around businesses, in parking lots, etc. — attracted by a food source such as trash or rodents. Community cats have no legal guardian, though many people care for them by feeding and sometimes providing outdoor shelter. These cats are not socialized to humans. They are timid and fearful around people and are not suited for adoption. Because most of these cats are not suited to living indoors, bringing them to a shelter is not the humane answer. Taking them to a shelter also doesn't solve the population problem — if cats are simply removed from an area, others will soon move in and breed. This is called the "Vacuum Effect."

The most humane and effective approach to managing the growing population of community cats is Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR). In TNR, entire colonies of community cats are trapped, sterilized, vaccinated, ear tipped, and returned to their territory of origin. TNR halts reproduction and many of the nuisance behaviors associated with unneutered cats, such as yowling, fighting, and marking territory. The cats are healthier, free from the stresses of mating and motherhood. TNR also includes colony management to ensure the cats' well-being and their peaceful coexistence with the rest of the community. Community cat programs not only provide life-saving options for cats who might otherwise be euthanized when admitted to a shelter but also can stabilize, and even reduce over time, the population of community cat colonies. Such efforts require support and funding and rely on many thousands of volunteer hours and out-of-pocket expenses incurred by dedicated New Yorkers.

**Do you pledge to support increasing funding to programs that support these community cat operations?**

**YES / NO Yes**

Additional Comments: Communities need to be better informed about TNR and its benefits.

## **2. Pursuing a More Humane City: Education, Health Care, and Social Services**

## **A. Pet-Friendly Housing**

As New York City continues to experience a housing affordability crisis with high displacement rates, housing must be accessible to people with companion animals. Keeping people and companion animals together reduces the burden on animal shelters and allowing New Yorkers to stay in their homes. This is a particularly significant concern for especially vulnerable populations such as low-income families, the elderly, and victims of domestic violence. Housing legislation and policy should expand affordable pet friendly housing options as well as the ability of those experiencing homelessness and victims of domestic violence to seek refuge in shelters with their pets.

**Would you support and vote for legislation soon to be introduced (Brannan, Cabrera) which would preserve the right of individuals over the age of 62 to not be denied housing on the basis of having a companion animal?**

**YES / NO Yes**

Additional comments: I work with older adults on many of their issues. This is a tough city to grow older in and often family members are not close by. The support of a companion animal is often key to their ability to be a part of the life of the community. The benefits of companion animals for older adults are another example of how rescued dogs and cats can serve to improve issues of social justice, and seniors typically make loving owners.

## **B. Homeless Services Accommodations for Companion Animals**

Currently, shelters provided by or under contract with the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) do not allow or accommodate pets. Individuals seeking shelter are forced to abandon their animals to be admitted, and thus, often choose to live on city streets. More info [here](#) and [here](#).

**Would you support and vote for [Intro 1483](#) (Levin), which would require the DHS, in collaboration with the Department of Social Services, to develop a plan to accommodate pets of homeless individuals and families with the objective of providing pet-friendly shelters and identifying other temporary pet care arrangements that would allow homeless pet-owners to keep their companion animals?**

**YES / NO Yes.** I have advocated for such a policy for years and will continue to do so.

**Would you support and vote for [Intro 1484](#) (Levin), which would require DHS to report, on a monthly basis, information on the placement or disposition of companion animals that belong to people who enter homeless shelters?**

**YES / NO Yes.**

Additional Comments: I have advocated that Safe Havens and shelters provide pet-friendly housing (temporary and permanent) for years. Only recently have the non-profits working in this



area provided for pet-friendly accommodations; but many homeless individuals will not, understandably, leave the street unless they can do so with their companion animal. Providing a pet friendly shelter has always seemed so sensible to me. As the author of the Open Data Law, I would promote its use to improve tracking of the placement and care of companion animals, especially those separated from their owners by city policy.

### **C. Fulfilling New York’s Humane Education Mandate**

Section 809 of the New York State Education Law requires instruction in the “humane treatment and protection of animals ... in every elementary school under state control or supported wholly or partly by public money of the state.” Although there is a penalty for non-compliance, the legislation has remained unenforced, and many educators and administrators are unaware of this statutory requirement. [More info](#).

**Would you support and vote for [Intro 1465](#) (Dromm), which would require the Department of Education to report on humane animal treatment instruction in public elementary schools?**

**YES / NO Yes**

Additional Comments: The Department of Education should report on humane animal treatment instruction in schools, and the effectiveness of that instruction in humanizing the classroom and providing lessons that students can take home with them about the value of animals. In addition, many principals are now bringing their dog to school or working with individuals who have dogs trained to work with children and they are bringing them to schools. These wonderful animals are a huge asset in the schools as they work well on many levels with the students.

### **D. 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 to raise them, which may lead to developmental issues. 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 other humane educators. More info here.

**Would you support and vote for legislation that would prohibit New York City schools from using mail-ordered eggs, live baby chickens and ducks for classroom projects?**

**YES / NO Yes**

**Would you co-sign a letter urging the NYC Schools Chancellor to ban the use of eggs, live baby chickens and ducks for classroom projects?**

**YES / NO Yes**

Additional Comments: These types of classroom animals are unfortunately a by-product of industrial animal production. But live animals in the classroom are not always a bad idea. For example, when the Parks Dept or Wild Bird Fund bring rehabilitated birds into schools to educate children about wildlife and reduce fear of wild animals they provide a significant social benefit.

## **E. Fireworks**

The booming sounds of fireworks are terrifying and overwhelming for pets and wildlife, as well as for veterans with PTSD, children on the autism spectrum, and survivors of gun violence. [According to the ASPCA](#), more dogs get lost on the Fourth of July than any other day of the year due to panicking and running off. On July 5th shelters notoriously have increased numbers of frightened lost pets. Additionally, baby birds and other infant wildlife become orphaned and starve to death as their parents panic from the sounds and take off. Wildlife are known to race into the road to escape the sounds, resulting in dangerous car collisions. A solution that has been instituted in many cities in Europe and Canada are silent fireworks. Silent fireworks deliver the same beautiful cascading colors but without the daunting decibels and startling explosions. Read more [here](#).

**Would you support and vote for legislation that would require all fireworks displays to be of the silent type?**

**YES / NO Yes**

Additional Comments: If possible and with further study.

## **3. Animals Used For Food**

### **A. Factory Farms**

As the global COVID-19 pandemic exposes the [dangers inherent](#) in our highly concentrated food system, [legislation](#) introduced by Senator Cory Booker, co-sponsored by Senator Elizabeth Warren, as well as its [House companion](#), introduced by Rep. Ro Khanna, would place a moratorium on new and expanding factory farms and provide a transition for farmers who want to transition out of operating a factory farm. The scale, density, and practices associated with Large Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) aka Factory Farms are heinously cruel to animals and present a range of public health, worker safety, and environmental problems.

**Would you support and vote for a New York City Council resolution calling on Congress to adopt [S.3221/H.R.6718](#), legislation to end factory farming?**

**YES / NO Yes**

The Green New Deal is a set of policy proposals that seeks to transform our energy system to 100% renewable energy while creating jobs needed to solve the climate crisis, and ensuring a just transition for workers and vulnerable communities, and has the potential to improve the welfare of countless animals, wild and domestic. The Green New Deal calls for massive investments in weatherization, public transportation, modern infrastructure and high-speed broadband, reducing emissions throughout the world, transitioning to sustainable farming, conserving public lands as wildlife habitat, as well as holding the fossil fuel industry accountable for our current environmental crises.

**Do you support the [New York State](#) and/or [federal Green New Deal legislation](#)?**

**YES / NO Yes**

**Do you believe the Green New Deal does enough to address the impact of CAFOs?**

**YES / NO No**

**Would you support and vote for [Res. 1151](#) (Constantinides) calling on corporate and government entities operating in New York City to divest from agricultural industries that benefit from deforestation and the acceleration of global warming?**

**YES / NO Yes**

**What do you believe the NYC Council should do to end factory farming? Additional Comments:**

## **B. Live Animal Slaughter Markets and Transportation**

There are 80+ slaughterhouses and live animal markets in NYC – more than any other U.S. city. [These facilities in New York are functionally no different than the live animal markets abroad where Coronavirus started.](#) In addition to horrific treatment of animals in these facilities (tiny cages, no vet care, severely limited food and water), these facilities pose a significant health and safety hazard to the community affecting the quality of life for neighborhood residents. Blood, feces, urine, body parts, and feathers are routinely found on our public sidewalks and streets due to the unsanitary conditions associated with slaughterhouses. Many of these slaughterhouses are located close to schools and playgrounds. Of critical concern, these facilities are rarely if ever inspected by regulators, and despite the animal cruelty and other impacts of these facilities, there is no meaningful oversight.

**Especially in light of COVID-19 and the threat of pandemics that are believed to originate from crowded, unsanitary animal markets, would you support and vote for legislation to**

**increase regulations, inspections and reporting requirements for live animal markets and other facilities in New York City where live animals are kept, and increased penalties for health code or animal cruelty violations?**

**YES / NO Yes**

**Would you support and vote for legislation that would require licensed slaughterhouses in New York City to have video recording systems in all areas with live animals?**

**YES / NO Yes**

Additional Comments: This step would be important in raising public consciousness about animal suffering.

### **C. Shipments of Live Animals**

Small animals such as chicks are regularly shipped through the US Postal Service. This terribly cruel practice is tragically routine. They are not provided with any food and water, and many animals suffer terribly or perish during transit. It is not uncommon for thousands of animals to be transported this way in the same shipment. The result is that animals often [arrive at their destinations dead](#).

**Would you support and vote for legislation that bans or restricts the shipment of live animals into New York City through the mail?**

**YES / NO Yes**

Additional Comments: The Post Office mail delivery system is no place for any living thing. Even plants, that my husband orders for his garden, arrive in less than excellent condition.

### **D. Restaurants**

**Would you support and vote for [Intro. 1405](#) (Dromm), which would offer clarity for consumers who wish to avoid animal-derived food products and allergens?**

This legislation would require the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to establish a food protection course and certification program for restaurants to demonstrate compliance with food allergen safety, and require restaurants to post a sign for customers on food allergen awareness. The bill would also establish a voluntary certification program for food service establishments who advertise themselves as capable of accommodating certain dietary restrictions, such as gluten-free, nut-free, vegetarian, and vegan, among others.

**YES / NO Yes**

Additional Comments: With the burden of regulation on small business, especially food establishments already heavy and costly, I would recommend that these new regs seek the

cooperation of business operators through education, training, and guidance for an extended period before any penalties are incurred.

## **E. Aquatic Animals**

There is widespread scientific consensus that aquatic animals such as fish, lobsters, octopus, squid, and other marine life can experience pain and suffering. Cruel and neglectful treatment of all animals, including aquatic animals, is a misdemeanor under New York State law. See, N.Y. Agric. & Mkts. Law § 353. New York courts have held that intentionally causing extreme pain to a pet fish is a felony. See, *People v. Garcia*, 29 A.D.3d 255, 257, (App. Div. 1st Dept.). In spite of this prohibition, commercially farmed aquatic animals live in filthy, barren tanks so overcrowded they can barely swim and where they are victims of disease outbreak, rough handling, and months to years of psychological deprivation.

**Would you support legislation to establish minimum animal welfare standards for procurement of aquatic animal products by city agencies relating to the following production practices? YES to all.**

<b>YES/NO</b>	Extreme overcrowding
<b>YES/NO</b>	Barren tanks unlike their natural habitats
<b>YES/NO</b>	Deprivation of food for several days during transport
<b>YES/NO</b>	Being slaughtered while fully conscious

Additional Comments: The poster child for such abuse are the lobster tanks in restaurants, crowded with animals waiting to be boiled alive. This should be banned.

## **4. Protecting and Coexisting with Urban Wildlife**

### **A. WildlifeNYC**

New York City is home to an immense diversity of urban wildlife. Our 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. While many animals inhabit New York year round, other species pass through on their annual migrations. The City has initiated a program, WildlifeNYC, aimed to promote awareness, tolerance, coexistence, and understanding of the wild critters we are so fortunate to share our city with.

**Will you support funding for the continuation and expansion of New York City's WildlifeNYC program?**

**YES / NO Yes**

Additional Comments: I have repeatedly sounded the alarm to city officials that our buildings and bright lights pose a hazard for migratory birds. We have had many examples of sidewalks littered with dead birds after a night of migration. This must be prevented.

I recently strongly opposed buildings of 20-30 stories on Governors Island which will pose a threat to wildlife. Governors Island serves as a vital stopover point for shorebirds travelling along the Atlantic flyway during spring and fall migration. Unfortunately, the City Council voted for the project. By contrast, I have supported the Billion Oyster Project for initiated by the Harbor School that would help preserve the ecosystem of the NY Harbor and estuary.

## **B. Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation**

New Yorkers often come in contact with injured wildlife and have no idea what to do. There is only one brick and mortar wildlife rescue facility in New York City, the Wild Bird Fund. There is no centralized administration of wildlife rescue and rehabilitation, or reliable information for what New York City residents should do when they encounter injured wildlife. Because of the limited information on the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's website, independent volunteer licensed rehabilitators are called upon to respond to emergencies and provide care to wild animals in need on a near daily basis. There is much more that New York City can do to support this vital service.

**Would you support increased city funding for wildlife rescue and rehabilitation facilities and services?**

**YES / NO Yes**

**Would you support establishing city-funded wildlife emergency response units as an alternative to untrained police officers responding to such situations?**

**YES / NO Yes**

Additional Comments: I have allocated city funding to the Wild Bird Fund, but they get very little government money. However, NYPD officers, Parks Dept staff and other city and state officials often bring injured wildlife to their premises as their medical and other staff are excellent and responsive. I would strongly support working with the Wild Bird Fund and similar organizations to craft units that would respond to wildlife emergencies.

## **C. Canada geese in NYC parks**

After the 2009 "Miracle on the Hudson", Mayor Bloomberg set forth on a policy of hiring USDA Wildlife Services, a federal agency notorious for inhumane wildlife killing practices, to exterminate Canada geese and goslings in New York City parks. This policy was always wrongheaded. Mayor de Blasio was elected on a promise to pursue alternative non-lethal approaches to Canada goose management. The current administration cancelled the contract with USDA Wildlife Services that compensated USDA to kill geese, instead opting for a non-lethal form of population control known as egg oiling. However, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which leases and controls the city's airports, has continued to contract with USDA to exterminate geese, and Mayor de Blasio has allowed the Port Authority and USDA to access city parks to do so. USDA Wildlife Services has killed hundreds of geese in New York City parks every summer for the past 10 years, decimating the local population. The regional

population of Canada geese is significantly reduced and should now be stabilized exclusively through non-lethal management practices going forward.

**Will you call for a complete end to killing of Canada geese in New York City parks, and demand that the Port Authority and USDA Wildlife Services pursue exclusively non-lethal methods of wildlife management in areas within the City's jurisdiction?**

**YES / NO Yes**

Additional Comments: Non-lethal methods should always be used where feasible except in cases of health related emergencies such as the spread of disease or pollution of public water systems; but even then, non-lethal methods should be used.

#### **D. Staten Island Deer**

In the past decade, white-tailed deer have taken up residence on Staten Island, believed to have swum across from increasingly developed areas of neighboring New Jersey. The City first responded by implementing conflict reduction efforts, including measures like increased traffic signage, a reduction of the speed limit, and the inclusion of white-tailed deer in New York City's [WildlifeNYC program](#) aimed at educating New Yorkers about coexistence and tolerance with urban wildlife. In May 2016, the City took a bold and unprecedented step of implementing a non-lethal deer management program that sought to stabilize the deer population by performing vasectomies on bucks. Over the past few years, vasectomies have been performed on more than 1,500 bucks that have stabilized and reduced the total deer population and have reduced conflicts caused by their presence.

Despite these encouraging results, some have pushed for a "controlled hunt" of Staten Island's deer. Controlled hunts require killing some number of deer every year, which often leads to a bounce-back effect that ultimately increases the population. In addition to the cruelty involved, annual culls are unlikely to achieve any long-term reduction in the deer population or actually address any of the conflicts associated with their presence.

**Will you support continuing the City's deer management program that has successfully stabilized and reduced the population of deer on Staten Island humanely and effectively?**

**YES / NO Yes**

**Will you oppose lethal management of deer on Staten Island, including a "controlled hunt"?**

**YES / NO Yes**

Additional Comments:

#### **E. Raccoons**

Even though the incidence of rabies has been [extremely rare](#) in New York City, with only one human case over the last 50 years, the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) requires that any raccoons brought to Animal Care Centers (ACC) be immediately euthanized, regardless whether they are sick or injured or healthy. Every year, hundreds of healthy raccoons are brought into ACC, usually by police officers responding to nuisance complaints, and killed instead of being assessed and potentially released or rehabbed.

**Would you join VFAR in calling on the DEC to allow healthy raccoons to be rehabilitated and/or released when suitable?**

**YES / NO Yes**

**Would you support establishing alternative protocols for emergency responders such that healthy raccoons are not brought to ACC?**

**YES / NO Yes**

Additional Comments: Like other wild animals whose populations must be controlled in the city, Captured healthy racoons should be returned to the wild and not euthanized.

## **F. Rats**

Historically, rat control invariably relies on cruel and imprecise extermination methods - poison bait, glue and snap traps, and more recently dry ice and drowning devices. Needless to say, these methods have failed to achieve lasting impacts on New York's total rodent population for decades (if not centuries). The Department of Health's Rat Academy [public education](#) on nonlethal rat management methods, debuting nearly 10 years ago, has been shown to be effective. [Feral cats](#) are also a potential way to manage rat populations.

**Would you support a comprehensive humane rat control program that would be focused on prevention, deterrence and infrastructural improvements?**

**YES / NO Yes**

Additional Comments: In Verdi Park, at 72 St and Broadway, a group of volunteers and a horticulturist from the Bronx Botanical Garden took out the invasive plants and planted many species of native NYS plants, and the rat population disappeared. I have advocated for the solar Big Belly trash receptacles in the parks, and the rats leave the area the day they are installed. And in my role as an elected official, I have sponsored many rat academies and worked with staff at the Dept of Health to educate the public, business owners, and NYCHA managers in rat prevention and control. Most experts agree that it is the human supplied garbage from homes and businesses that drives the rat problem. Our most effective means to battle the rats is to get our sanitation practices under control. The Mayor's decision to cut organics collection created a smorgasbord for rats on every block.

## **5. 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, and Israel is on the verge of [banning the entire fur trade](#). 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 [Intro 1476 \(Johnson\)](#) that would ban the sale of new apparel products using real animal fur?**

**YES / NO Yes**

Additional Comments:

## **6. Animals Used in Entertainment:**

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### **A. Carriage Horses**

Advocates have long called out the poor working and living conditions for horses used for NYC carriage rides. Despite common belief, the horses do not live in Central Park, they are forced to travel through NYC traffic to get to and from Central Park. Despite improvements implemented over the years, the horses are often made to work long days - sometimes in extreme weather conditions, and they can go weeks without any 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. As recently as March 2020, a [12-year-old horse named Aisha was euthanized after collapsing in Central Park](#), a tragic incident that was captured on video camera by a horrified pedestrian. Many horses have died on the streets of NYC or been sent or sold to slaughter once they are unable to continue working. Carriage horse operations have resumed after a temporary hiatus for COVID-19.

**Would you cosponsor and vote for legislation to ban horse carriages in New York City?**

**YES / NO Yes**

**Would you cosponsor and vote for legislation to enact stronger protections for all working horses in New York City, including a mandatory retirement age and restrictions on sales of exhausted horses to “kill buyers”?**

**YES / NO Yes**

Additional Comments: I supported legislation to ban horse carriages in NYC in past elections and in office and will do so in the future.

## **B. Rodeos**

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 sharpened 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 legislation which would prohibit these practices at rodeos?**

**YES / NO Yes**

Additional Comments: I have not supported the rodeos in the past and will continue to have the same position.

## **C. Captive Wildlife, Zoos and Aquariums**

The Bronx Zoo currently has two wild-born female Asian elephants, Happy and Patty. Happy, has been confined alone for over fourteen years in a small enclosure that contains a one-acre outdoor yard, barren corrals, and an industrial holding facility. In the winter months, when it’s too cold for her to be outside, she is confined to an industrial cement structure that is lined with windowless, barred cages. Happy has been documented engaging in unnatural behavior indicative of distress and suffering. Scientists who are experts in elephant cognition and behavior have attested that the Bronx Zoo cannot meet Happy’s biological and psychological needs. There has been a longstanding campaign for the Bronx Zoo to close its elephant exhibit and send Happy to an elephant sanctuary.

**Would you join VFAR and other advocates in demanding that the Bronx Zoo close its elephant exhibit and release Happy and Patty to an elephant sanctuary?**

**YES / NO Yes**

Through extensive study and observation, scientists have found that elephants are self-aware, autonomous animals. In other words, they are cognitively, emotionally, and socially complex beings who have the capacity to exercise free will and make choices about how to spend their

days and live their lives, just as human beings do. The right to liberty protects an individual's autonomy and ensures that she cannot be imprisoned (held in an environment that deprives her of her autonomy) or exploited (displayed, used for entertainment, or forced to breed).

**Would you support legislation that would recognize and protect elephants' right to liberty?**

**YES / NO Yes**

Additional Comments: Global elephant populations are highly endangered and we must not only treat captive animals humanely but do much more as a society to protect the remaining wild elephants.

Gale A Brewer

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CANDIDATE SIGNATURE