

2021 NYC Comptroller 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 primary elections are required to fill out this questionnaire, which will be posted on our website. Please submit to woof@vfar.org by **February 12, 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 and David Karopkin, david@vfar.org. We are happy to help you better understand animal protection policy, and we're happy to advise your campaign.



VOTERS FOR ANIMAL RIGHTS

Candidate Contact Information & Campaign Information

Candidate Name: Brad Lander

Pronouns: he/him/his

Cell Phone: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Campaign Manager: Chris Walsh

Pronouns: he/him/his

Cell Phone: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

District #: Citywide

Borough: N/A

Neighborhoods In Your District: All the New York City neighborhoods!

Party: Democrat/Working Families

Office Sought: New York City Comptroller

Name of Campaign Committee: Lander for NYC

Campaign Field Office Address: 456 5th Avenue, #3B, Brooklyn NY 11215

Campaign Website: <https://landerfornyc.com>

Social Media Handles (Facebook/Twitter/Instagram): Twitter: @bradlander; Facebook: facebook.com/BradLander/; Instagram: instagram.com/brad.lander/

Occupation or Employer: New York City Council Member, 39th District

Organizational Affiliations (if any):

Local Progress, board member 2013-2021, board chair 2017-2020
Get Organized BK, co-founder, 2016-2020
Prospect Park Alliance, ex-officio trustee, 2010-2021
Pratt Center for Community Development, 2003-2009



VOTERS FOR ANIMAL RIGHTS

Mayor's Task Force on 421-a Property Tax Reform, 2006

Mayor's Neighborhood Investment Advisory Panel, 2003-2009

Fifth Avenue Committee, 1993-2003

Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development (ANHD) President, 1994-1999

Jews for Racial & Economic Justice Co-Chair, 1994-1998

NYC Organizing Support Center, 1997-2002

South Brooklyn Mutual Housing Association Board, 1993-1998

Endorsements (if any):

The campaign has received endorsements so far from the Working Families Party, Lambda Independent Democrats of New York, Village Independent Democrats, Four Freedoms Democratic Club, Independent Neighborhood Democrats, Make the Road Action, VOCAL-NY Action, New York Communities for Change, New York Progressive Action Network, CUFFH Action, Brooklyn Young Democrats, Central Brooklyn Independent Democrats, Our Revolution, Grand Street Democrats, Hell's Kitchen Democrats, Coalition for a District Alternative (CODA), Communications Workers of America (CWA) District 1, Teamsters Local 202, United Auto Workers (UAW) Region 9A, the Laundry, Distribution & Food Service Joint Board SEIU (aka Workers United SEIU), the Freelancers Union, Congressman Jerry Nadler, State Senators Julia Salazar, Alessandra Biaggi, and Andrew Gounardes; Council Members Debi Rose, Justin Brannan and Margaret Chin; activist and former Gubernatorial candidate Cynthia Nixon, former Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger, former Queens DA candidate Tiffany Caban, activist and organizer Ady Barkan, Vote Mama Founder Liuba Grechen Shirley, and District Leaders Kristina Naplatarski and Emilia Decaudin.



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Initiatives

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

Yes. The Comptroller is deeply involved in contracting, investing, and overseeing the City's use of funds. We should not be spending money to torture animals, have our pensions invested in companies that torture animals. We should be making sure the money we spend on animal welfare is being spent well. And we should use our contracting process in a way that will be better for animals and for the environment.

2. How can the NYC Comptroller's office best work to advance the interests of non-human animals?

The NYC Comptroller's office has an array of tools that can be used to prevent cruelty to animals and advance more humane treatment:

As fiduciary of the City's pensions funds, I will undertake a "Strategic Plan for Responsible Investing," through which I would work with the funds trustees, members, and a wider array of stakeholders on an investment strategy that ensures the retirement security of public sector workers, while aligning with their humane and long-term values. During this process, we will consider proposals for socially responsible investing, including divesting from factory farms, as well as shareholder activism to pressure companies within the portfolio for more humane treatment of non-human animals.

Second, as part of my office's review of City contracts, we will identify animal products that we procure from factory farms, audit those suppliers for animal cruelty as appropriate, and publish our results along with proposals for change.

Third, as I conduct audits of City agency operations related to animal conservation and welfare, I will focus on actual results of those operations. This goes from our wildlife conservation areas across the City to our Animal Control Centers and more. We need to make sure that the agencies and contracts put in place to protect domestic and wild animals are accomplishing their goals. We also need to make sure there is adequate funding to protect non-human New Yorkers, both wild and domestic.

Finally, it is also important that the Comptroller be a voice for non-human animals beyond the typical four-corners of the Comptroller's office. That is why I voted to ban foie gras last year and why I supported (and still support) legislation to ban fur. I also support the banning of the sale of dogs, cats, and rabbits in pet stores, as well as banning puppy and kitty mills within New York and the importation of dogs and cats bred in puppy mills outside of New York. New York has strong animal cruelty laws that were designed to apply to animal agriculture, but in practice, they have not been enforced against factory farms. I would urge District Attorneys and the Attorney General to apply our laws in that context. At the same time, I would support legislation to ban the importation of animal products that were produced in a manner that would violate animal cruelty laws in New York State.



VOTERS FOR ANIMAL RIGHTS

3. How will you use the audit power of the NYC Comptroller to protect animals in New York City, domestic and wildlife, to help provide support and resources to New Yorkers who work to protect animals, to promote plant-based food, and end cruel practices to animals beyond NYC's borders?

See above. I believe the City needs to develop a comprehensive plan to protect companion animals, farmed animals, and wild animals. As Comptroller, I would audit components of that plan to ensure that there is adequate funding to protect domestic and wild animals, that the funding is being used appropriately and responsibly, and that domestic and wild animals are in fact being protected.

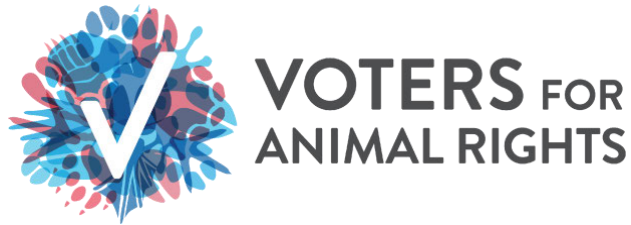
4. What animal issues will you prioritize and lead on as NYC Comptroller? How would you work to empower the animal advocacy community to reach new success and growth into the 2022-2025 term, and ensure that New York is on the forefront of animal protection?

Every non-human animal should be treated with dignity and respect. In my work as NYC Comptroller, I would focus on reducing cruelty to farmed animals. These are also the animals who are treated the worst (and animal farming is one of the leading causes of the climate crisis). This is also an area where the Comptroller has the most leverage, since New York City has multi-million dollar contracts for products of animal agriculture, and New York City pensions are invested in corporations that profit from animal agriculture.

In pursuit of these goals, I pledge to work closely with VFAR and the animal advocacy community. My theory of change is one of "co-governance," in which elected officials work closely with activists and stakeholders who are building power for change, to build strong "inside/outside" coalitions. That is the type of work I have done in the City Council (with organizing partners in labor and workers rights, housing and tenants rights, safe streets and livable communities, and animal rights). I am committed to building on this model co-governance as Comptroller, while preserving the independence and integrity of the office. I commit to listen to and work closely with VFAR and other animal advocates on animal protection issues.

5. What achievements or advocacy for animals are you most proud of, e.g. supporting humane legislation, leading animal protection efforts, attending protests or events; or adopting a shelter pet, volunteering with an animal rescue organization, supporting animal protection organizations, living a plant-based (vegan or vegetarian) lifestyle, etc.? Did you grow up with or currently live with companion animals?

In the City Council, I have been a consistent supporter of animal rights, supporting the ban on foie gras, banning abusive horse carriage stables and practices, and most recently the ban on fur. After the Bloomberg Administration contracted with UDDA Wildlife Services to slaughter geese in Prospect Park, I organized protests together with activists to demand that it never happen again, and worked in partnership with the Prospect Park staff on a humane approach to ensure that it did and does not. I was an early and strong supporter of "Meatless Mondays" (which was both piloted and announced in my district).



In my personal life, inspired by my daughter (who was inspired in her health class in New York City Public Schools), I stopped eating meat and poultry in 2019 (for now, I remain pescatarian), and have made a conscious effort to reduce animal suffering caused by my actions.

6. 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?

I do not have a platform on my website (we are issuing plans, but have only published a small handful so far), but I would be very happy for VFAR to publish this questionnaire on your website, committing me publicly to the things we pledge here. If I receive the VFAR endorsement, I will consult with VFAR to make sure I am highlighting the most important issues. And yes, if I get the VFAR endorsement, I will promote it on both my website on and my social media pages.

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

Yes. This staff member would work with VFAR and other animal rights organizations, and would be assigned to help coordinate, publicize, and follow up on any audits of agencies, operations, or contracts that involve non-human animals to ensure that we are considering not only the financial efficiency of the agency/operation/contract, but also whether the non-human animals are being protected.

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

Yes. Non-human animals are sentient beings, and they deserve to be treated with dignity and respect. Humans are just one species of animal (albeit the one causing the vast amount of cruelty and climate devastation for all the others). Social justice does not stop where the species line ends. It means compassion for all living beings.

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.

How will your office ensure that ACC and other non-profit animal rescue organizations are properly funded, which is especially critical post-COVID?

The Comptroller does not make the budget, but the Comptroller does review it, comment on it, and audit it. The Comptroller represents all New Yorkers -- not just taxpayers, not just citizens, and not even just humans. One of my priorities will be to ensure that the New York City budget is just and compassionate. Budgets are moral documents, and this is true not only for their impact on humans, but also for their impact on non-human animals in our city. The ACC is an essential organization. It and other non-profit animal rescue organizations provide needed services for non-human New Yorkers, saving countless lives each year. It is imperative that these organizations receive adequate funding. The health and safety of countless dogs, cats, and more rely on 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.

How will your office ensure that these needed programs to support community cats are properly funded?



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The Cat Rescuers documentary did an incredible job of portraying the extraordinary dedication of TNR volunteers -- including the time, money, risk, and energy they expend to ensure the safety and health of New York's feral cat population. They should not have to sneak around like criminals to show compassion for their non-human neighbors. The City has relied on TNR as a humane way of keeping New York's feral cat populations healthy -- but we should not rely exclusively on individuals willing to expend their own time and money. We should support and fund this work.

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.

How will your office work to preserve the right of individuals to not be denied housing on the basis of having a companion animal?

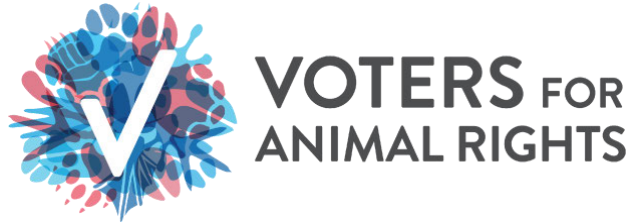
Poor New Yorkers, bonded with their non-human companions, are often unable to find safe, affordable housing due to restrictions on keeping companion animals. Worse, homeless shelters ban companion animals, causing countless New Yorkers to face the impossible choice of giving up their best friends or sleeping on the streets. Victims of domestic violence must choose between their best friends and their own safety. Beyond being cruel, this policy has horrible public health effects.

While some individuals have allergies to certain companion animals, that does not justify the extent of discrimination against them. I support legislation to expand affordable pet-friendly housing options, including access to our shelter system for homeless New Yorkers and New Yorkers who have been victims of domestic violence.

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](#).

How will your office work to support the accommodation of homeless individuals and families with companion animals?



Homeless shelters must allow individuals to bring companion animals. While some shelters can be cat-free or dog-free for individuals with allergies, homeless New Yorkers with companion animals must have safe and accessible shelters that will accept them with their companions. I support legislation that would require DHS to admit companion animals to shelters under contract with them.

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.](#)

How can your office work to ensure that the Department of Education implements humane animal treatment instruction in public elementary schools, as required by state law?

As Comptroller, I will be responsible for auditing the Department of Education. These audits will not be exclusively about whether the money is well spent; they will also focus on whether the DOE is in compliance with State law. In conducting DOE audits, I will review not only DOE policy for implementing such curriculum, but also the practical implementation of the curriculum itself, to ensure that the DOE and public elementary schools comply with the law, including the Section 809 requirements (which I wholeheartedly support) for instruction in the humane treatment and protection of animals.

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 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



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Additional comments:

Animals are not objects or toys. Children must learn that animals are sentient beings deserving of respect and dignity.

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 requiring major city-approved fireworks displays to be of the silent type?

YES / NO

Additional comments:

Fireworks are beautiful and fun, but we do not need to choose between giving up our celebrations and forcing non-human New Yorkers to suffer in fear. It is quite easy for the city to provide an online soundtrack for all those who would like to listen on their speakers or headphones.

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.

Do you support [S.3221/H.R.6718](#), federal legislation to end factory farming?



VOTERS FOR ANIMAL RIGHTS

YES / NO

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

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

YES / NO

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, what will you do as NYC Comptroller to increase regulations, inspections and other oversight over animal welfare at facilities in New York City where live animals are kept?

Slaughterhouses are licensed and regulated by New York State, and therefore the shortcomings of the work of the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets are unfortunately beyond the jurisdiction of the New York City Comptroller's audits. However, as Comptroller, I will work within the powers of the office to address this issue, as it is not only inhumane, but also creates unsafe conditions for New Yorkers -- those who consume the animal products, those who work in the slaughterhouses, and those who live in their vicinity. I support increasing the requirements of Article 5-A to ensure that all slaughterhouses comply with both the letter and spirit of our animal cruelty laws.



VOTERS FOR ANIMAL RIGHTS

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](#). Private possession of ducks and roosters is illegal in New York City, so it makes no sense that USPS would allow these animals to be shipped into the city.

How would you support efforts to ban or restrict the shipment of live animals into New York City through the mail?

I fully support legislation to ban shipment of live animals through the US Postal Service. I will use my bully pulpit as Comptroller to push for such legislation. In reviewing mail service, I will also publish reports of deaths or injuries to animals during shipment.

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.

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

YES / NO

If yes, how will you lead the NYC Comptroller's office to achieve this? Additional Comments:

There are more non-human New Yorkers than human ones, and more non-human tourists than human ones as well. They should all be protected and respected. As Comptroller, I will be responsible for auditing programs such as WildlifeNYC to ensure that they are accomplishing their goals. I will also review the budget to ensure that WildlifeNYC and other conservation programs are adequately funded.



VOTERS FOR ANIMAL RIGHTS

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.

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

YES / NO

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

YES / NO

If yes, how will you lead the NYC Comptroller's office to achieve this? Additional Comments:

I support increasing city funding for wildlife rescue and rehabilitation facilities. As part of my budgeting and auditing work, as my office looks for areas where we can save money or reduce expenses, we will be in a stronger position to support new and increased areas of funding.

I also support establishing wildlife emergency response units, as part of a re-invented 911 system, which would be re-organized to provide a broader range of emergency response than NYPD -- mental health professionals for mental health emergencies, trained staff to help women and other people escape from domestic violence, and in this case, trained wildlife professionals.

Additionally, there need to be more sites for injured wildlife. If you find an injured bird, you should not have to travel to either the Upper West Side or the Rockaways in order to get treatment for them.

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



VOTERS FOR ANIMAL RIGHTS

with USDA to exterminate geese, and the current administration has allowed the Port Authority and USDA to access city parks to do so. USDA Wildlife Services kills hundreds of geese in New York City parks and has done so every summer for the past 10 years. The regional population of Canada geese has been significantly reduced and we believe should now be stabilized exclusively through non-lethal management practices going forward.

Do you support ending the killing of geese in New York City parks, and support refusing USDA Wildlife Services access to New York City parks for the purposes of killing wildlife?

YES / NO

Would you audit contracts between the City of New York and USDA Wildlife Services?

YES / NO

Additional Comments:

After the Bloomberg Administration worked with USDA Wildlife Services to slaughter geese in Prospect Park, I organized protests together with activists to demand that it never happen again, and worked in partnership with the Prospect Park staff on a humane approach to insure that it did and does not. I strongly support ending this practice, and would audit those contracts to make sure it does.

D. Humane and Effective Rat Control

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 focused on prevention, deterrence, and infrastructural improvements?

YES / NO

If yes, how will you lead the NYC Comptroller's office to achieve this? Additional Comments:

Rats are sentient creatures, and must be treated as such. However, when they wind up in people's houses, they become a serious health hazard. This problem disproportionately affects poor, Black and Brown New Yorkers, especially NYCHA residents. We cannot and must not tell poor, Black, and Brown New Yorkers (or any others) they need to bear the risks of living with rats. The Comptroller's office must work with NYCHA and the Department of Health to solve this problem in the most humane way possible. This will include education, research, and investment.



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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, and stores such as Macy's and Bloomingdales have stopped selling fur. There are ethical alternatives to fur which are not only stylish and warm but environmentally friendly. According to fashion experts, fur production is only a small portion of what New York City's fashion produces, the number of jobs specific to fur production is small, and the workforce and infrastructure can easily be transferred towards other materials. However, this multi-billion dollar industry has made clear its intentions to oppose our efforts to end the sale of fur in New York City, rather than make the necessary transition away from fur. More info [here](#).

Do you support banning the sale of new apparel products using real animal fur in New York?

YES / NO

If yes, how will you lead the NYC Comptroller's office to achieve this? Additional Comments:

I co-sponsor the fur ban bill in the City Council. As Comptroller, I will continue to push for this legislation. I will also use the bully pulpit as Comptroller to push for a state-wide ban.

6. Animals Used in Entertainment:

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. Yet, the carriage horse industry in NYC has refused to make any animal welfare improvements,



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opposing legislation to lower the “heat index” so that horses are not forced to work in high humidity, as well as opposing moving the “hack line” where horses line up on 59th Street where vehicles constantly whiz by into Central Park away from traffic. The industry has also totally rejected any alternatives proposed by animal advocates that don’t involve horses such as pedicabs, taxi medallions, or electric buggy cars, that would offer a job transition.

In April 2020, the cruelty and recalcitrance of the industry owners led to the Chicago City Council voting to outlaw horse drawn carriage operations within the city and the law took effect on January 1, 2021. Meanwhile, carriage horse operations have resumed in New York City after a temporary hiatus for COVID-19, and we have already documented instances of horses and consumers being placed in concerning if not outright dangerous situations during this time.

Do you support legislation to ban horse carriages in New York City?

YES / NO

If yes, how will you lead the NYC Comptroller’s office to achieve this? Additional Comments:

I will continue to support legislation that bans horse carriages in New York City. There is too little oversight on the industry, and I will provide as much as I can as Comptroller.

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.

Do you support legislation which would prohibit these practices at rodeos?

YES / NO

If yes, how will you lead the NYC Comptroller’s office to achieve this? Additional Comments:

I support Linda Rosenthal’s bill A8554 and I will continue to support it as Comptroller. Furthermore, there is no exception to animal cruelty laws for rodeos. I will work with New York City DAs and the New York State Attorney General to ensure that our animal cruelty laws are enforced across the board.



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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

2/12/21

CANDIDATE SIGNATURE

DATE