



## COMMITTEE ON ANIMAL LAW

April 13, 2017

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The Honorable Bill de Blasio  
Mayor of the City of New York  
253 Broadway  
New York, NY 10007

**Re: OneNYC**

Dear Mayor de Blasio,

The New York City Bar Association's Committee on Animal Law (the "Committee") is grateful for this opportunity to offer its ideas in response to your OneNYC campaign, which has asked "How can we make our city better and stronger for our shared future?" In particular, you have sought suggestions on how to improve the future of New York City in terms of growth, sustainability and resiliency, with a special focus on equity.

The Committee regularly addresses legal, regulatory, and policy issues on a local, state and national level affecting non-human animals, both wild and domestic. This letter seeks to address three areas in which your administration can help level the playing field for New Yorkers and provide equal access to opportunities for the city's residents and animals: (1) providing humane education in NYC schools, (2) offering vegetarian or vegan meal options in city institutions, and (3) improving access to sheltering for domestic violence victims with pets.

### **I. HUMANE EDUCATION IN NYC SCHOOLS**

To improve the future of New York City, we should provide all New York City children with education on the humane treatment of animals. This type of education cultivates empathy toward animals, helps children understand the effects of their actions on animals and the environment, and combats animal abuse, which is closely correlated with violent crimes against humans. Between 2001 and 2005, for instance, 65% of those arrested in the city of Chicago for animal crimes had also been arrested for battery against another person.<sup>1</sup> Out of thirty-six convicted

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<sup>1</sup> *Animal Cruelty and Human Violence*, THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES, [http://www.humanesociety.org/issues/abuse\\_neglect/qa/cruelty\\_violence\\_connection\\_faq.html](http://www.humanesociety.org/issues/abuse_neglect/qa/cruelty_violence_connection_faq.html) (citing Brian Degenhardt, Report from the Chicago Police Department, *Statistical Summary of Offenders Charged with Crimes against Companion Animals July 2001-July 2005*). See also Lydia S. Antoncic, *A New Era In Humane Education: How Troubling Youth Trends and a Call for Character Education Are Breathing New Life into Efforts to Educate Our Youth*

multiple murderers questioned in another study, 46% said that they had tortured animals as adolescents.<sup>2</sup> A six-year study conducted in eleven cities showed that pet abuse is one of four predictors of violence against a domestic partner.<sup>3</sup>

State law already mandates instruction in the humane treatment of animals in public schools, but schools do not always comply with this law.<sup>4</sup> This appears to be a result of a lack of awareness of the requirement, rather than any reluctance on the part of school administrators to provide such instruction.<sup>5</sup> Section 809 of the New York State Education Law requires that every elementary school under the control of the State, or supported wholly or partly by public money of the State, provide instruction on the humane treatment and protection of animals and lessons on the importance of spaying and neutering.<sup>6</sup> Such instruction does not need to be taught separately in a school's curriculum and can be taught together with work in "literature, reading, language, nature study or ethnology."<sup>7</sup> The penalty for non-compliance with the humane education mandate is withdrawal of public school funding.<sup>8</sup>

To help increase compliance with Section 809, a resolution was proposed in the City Council (Resolution No. 497) in 2006 calling upon the New York City Department of Education to issue a memorandum to all New York City public schools that notifies them of the humane education mandate and to require that all elementary school principals direct their teachers to act in accordance with the law.<sup>9</sup> Although the resolution ultimately was not approved, in 2008 the Council did pass Resolution No. 1541, which calls on the New York City Department of Education to survey schools for non-compliance with various curricular mandates in the state education law, including instruction in the humane treatment of animals, and to assist schools that are not in compliance to fully comply.<sup>10</sup> The Committee strongly encourages the City to renew action to ensure full compliance with Section 809.

One way for the City to help implement the Section 809 mandate in a cost-effective manner is by incorporating humane education into existing educational programs and by partnering with qualified private organizations that are familiar with the issues and willing to provide materials and

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*About the Value of All Life*, 9 ANIMAL L. 183 (2003), available at [https://www.animallaw.info/sites/default/files/lralvol9\\_p183.pdf](https://www.animallaw.info/sites/default/files/lralvol9_p183.pdf). (All webpages cited in this letter were last visited on March 10, 2017.)

<sup>2</sup> *Animal Cruelty and Human Violence*, THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES, [http://www.humanesociety.org/issues/abuse\\_neglect/qa/cruelty\\_violence\\_connection\\_faq.html](http://www.humanesociety.org/issues/abuse_neglect/qa/cruelty_violence_connection_faq.html) (citing Cohen, W. (1996). Congressional Register, 142(141), Oct. 3).

<sup>3</sup> Benita Walton-Moss et al., *Risk Factors for Intimate Partner Violence and Associated Injury Among Urban Women*, 30 J. OF COMMUNITY HEALTH 377–389 (2005).

<sup>4</sup> Lydia S. Antoncic, *A New Era In Humane Education*, 9 ANIMAL L. 183, 210 (2003) (citing interview with Sheila Schwartz, President of United Federation of Teachers' Humane Education Committee).

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> N.Y. EDUC. L. § 809(1).

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

<sup>8</sup> *Id.*

<sup>9</sup> N.Y.C. Council Resolution No. 497 (Sept. 13, 2006).

<sup>10</sup> N.Y.C. Council Resolution No. 1541 (Dec. 18, 2008).

assistance to schools in developing humane education curricula. For example, New York State legislation known as SAVE (Safe Schools Against Violence in Education) seeks to address violence prevention within New York State's schools by requiring a civility, citizenship and character education component in the K-12 course of instruction and requiring health curricula to address issues of violence prevention.<sup>11</sup> Providing humane education, as already mandated by New York State law for public elementary schools, may be one way to comply with these additional requirements, particularly since the evidence overwhelmingly supports the premise that animal abuse is often linked to violent crimes against humans.<sup>12</sup> Opportunities also exist for New York City to partner with qualified private organizations that are familiar with these issues and willing to provide materials and assistance to the schools in developing humane education curricula. For example, the not-for-profit charity HEART (Humane Education Advocates Reaching Teachers) works with educators, administrators and community leaders in New York City to help them comply with Section 809 and SAVE. The Committee encourages the formation of such public/private partnerships as a cost-effective means of promoting humane education.

The Committee recognizes the importance of humane education for students of all ages and strongly supports efforts to bring New York City public schools into compliance with existing law. We urge the Mayor to take any and all action necessary to ensure that all students are being provided with the instruction mandated by Section 809.

## **II. VEGETARIAN OR VEGAN MEAL OPTIONS IN CITY INSTITUTIONS**

Whether for health, for the environment, or for animal welfare or religious reasons, more and more Americans are turning to vegetarian and vegan diets. According to a 2013 Public Policy Polling study, 13% of the U.S. population is vegetarian or vegan.<sup>13</sup> A 2008 Harris Interactive study commissioned by the Vegetarian Resource Group found that about 7.5 million people in the U.S. ate diets that did not include any animal products; further, 33 percent of Americans ate vegan or vegetarian meals much or most of the time, even though they were not vegan or vegetarian.<sup>14</sup> While we are unaware of any survey measuring the number of vegetarians or vegans in New York City, the percentage of New York City vegetarians or vegans is likely in line with (or may even exceed) the national percentage, and New York City ranks first in the country when it comes to having the highest number of vegetarian and vegan restaurants.<sup>15</sup>

Yet New Yorkers who follow vegan or vegetarian diets – many of whom do so for moral, ethical, or religious reasons, or due to serious health concerns – often find themselves with limited

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<sup>11</sup> N.Y. EDUC. L. § 801-a.

<sup>12</sup> See Linda Merz-Perez, *Childhood Cruelty to Animals and Subsequent Violence Against Humans*, 45 INT'L J. OF OFFENDER THERAPY AND COMPARATIVE CRIMINOLOGY 556-73 (2001), available at <http://kheide.myweb.usf.edu/file/journal/AnimalCruelty.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> Public Policy Polling, Results of Poll (Feb. 21-24, 2013), Feb. 26, 2013 [http://www.publicpolicypolling.com/pdf/2011/PPP\\_Release\\_NationalFOOD\\_022613.pdf](http://www.publicpolicypolling.com/pdf/2011/PPP_Release_NationalFOOD_022613.pdf) (stating that 6% of the population identifies as vegetarian and 7% as vegan).

<sup>14</sup> VRG Blog Editor, *How Many Adults are Vegan in the US?*, THE VEGETARIAN RESOURCE BLOG GROUP (Dec. 5, 2011), <http://www.vrg.org/blog/2011/12/05/how-many-adults-are-vegan-in-the-u-s/>.

<sup>15</sup> Priceonomics Data Studio, *Ranking the Most (and Least) Vegetarian-Friendly Cities*, PRICEONOMICS.COM (Oct. 12, 2016), <https://priceonomics.com/ranking-the-most-and-least-vegetarian-friendly/>.

options at public schools, universities, hospitals or prisons. These New York City institutions should offer meal choices that accommodate these residents.

### **K-12 Schools**

An April 2014 poll of 1,200 Americans conducted by Harris Interactive for the Vegetarian Resource Group found that 4 percent of children ages 8 to 18 identified as vegetarians.<sup>16</sup> There is, however, no law requiring schools to offer a vegetarian or vegan meal every day. As a result, many parents have to rely exclusively on homemade lunches in order for their children to eat a vegetarian or vegan meal at school. To ensure that these children have the same access to school-provided meals as other children, the Committee strongly encourages the City to take action to ensure that New York City schools offer vegetarian or vegan options every day.

Currently, the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) – the federally assisted meal program that provides low-cost or free lunches to 31 million school-aged children each year – provides some vegetarian or vegan options, but does not offer them every day. While school districts and independent schools that take part in the NSLP must serve lunches that meet federal nutritional requirements based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, local school authorities make the decisions about exactly what foods to serve.<sup>17</sup> Notably, the federal nutritional requirements are already expanding to recognize vegan and vegetarian alternatives.<sup>18</sup> For instance, the USDA has already approved plant protein products as meat alternatives, including nut and seed butters, cooked beans and peas, and soy protein foods that fulfill the requirements set forth by the USDA for alternative protein products (e.g., veggie burgers).<sup>19</sup> In 2012, the USDA issued a memorandum recognizing tofu as an acceptable meat alternative in the NSLP.<sup>20</sup> The memorandum specified that meat substitute products made from tofu, such as tofu sausages that are easily recognizable as such, can be credited as well. In addition to tofu, the memorandum also noted that soy yogurt is now creditable as a meat alternate. We urge the City to encourage local school food authorities to take vegans and vegetarians into account when deciding which specific foods to serve. Children with vegan and vegetarian diets deserve an equal chance to participate in school-provided lunches, especially reduced or free lunches provided through the NSLP.

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<sup>16</sup> VRG Blog Editor, *How Many Teens and Other Youth Are Vegetarian and Vegan?* (May 30, 2014), THE VEGETARIAN RESOURCE BLOG GROUP, <http://www.vrg.org/blog/2014/05/30/how-many-teens-and-other-youth-are-vegetarian-and-vegan-the-vegetarian-resource-group-asks-in-a-2014-national-poll/>.

<sup>17</sup> Ashlee Cartwright, *Vegan-at-Law: Vegan and Vegetarian Options in the National School Lunch Program*, GENERATION VEGGIE (July 18, 2015), <http://www.generationveggie.org/vegan-at-law-vegan-and-vegetarian-options-in-the-national-school-lunch-program/>.

<sup>18</sup> There are still strides to be made in honoring the diets of all school children. Ashlee Cartwright, *Vegan-at-Law*, *supra* (“[U]nlike the USDA’s Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), which specifically mentions the serving of soy milk to children, the NSLP only lists lactose-free milk as an acceptable option. There is no specific mention of soy or other non-dairy milks. Unfortunately, lactose-free doesn’t necessarily mean dairy-free.”).

<sup>19</sup> Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, 81 FR 50131, 50137, *available at* <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2016/07/29/2016-17227/national-school-lunch-program-and-school-breakfast-program-nutrition-standards-for-all-foods-sold-in>.

<sup>20</sup> Food and Nutrition Service, USDA, Memorandum re: Crediting Tofu and Soy Yogurt Products, Feb. 22, 2012, <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SP16-2012os.pdf>.

The success of offering vegan and vegetarian meals has been confirmed by two public schools in New York City that serve only vegetarian meals. In January 2013, Public School 244 in Queens was the first school in the nation to adopt a 100% vegetarian menu, serving students tofu wraps, veggie chili and fresh fruits. The shift to a vegetarian menu began as a response to parents' and school officials' pleas to offer healthier food options. The school started serving vegetarian meals three times a week, then increased it to four times a week. The principal noted that "[w]e believe that, if we taught kids to make healthy choices, it would help them to grow as students and well-rounded children."<sup>21</sup>

Their success inspired Peck Slip School in Lower Manhattan to follow suit, with the help of New York Coalition for Healthy School Food. The Coalition's executive director noted: "More schools are asking for vegetarian menus, in order to increase their students' intake of whole plant foods, which they understand are associated with lower BMI, better health, less sick days, and increased concentration."<sup>22</sup>

While these schools have gone the extra mile to being only vegetarian, we are not asking your office to encourage the implementation of a solely vegetarian menu every day in every school, but only to implement a vegetarian or vegan option every day in every school. Given the fact that the USDA has already approved several plant protein products as meat alternatives and that many schools already occasionally offer a vegetarian or vegan option, it should not be a costly overhaul to extend this practice to a daily basis. Furthermore, there is already a significant push from parents and health officials to combat childhood obesity and other diseases with healthier, plant-based diets. Taking action in this area would benefit your vegetarian and vegan constituents as well as those looking for healthier meals in schools.

### **Universities**

Similarly, we urge the City to provide vegan or vegetarian meals daily at city university campuses. College students are increasingly turning to vegetarian or vegan diets, and according to a 2004 survey from the food service company ARAMARK, a quarter of college students interviewed said that it is "important" to them to have vegan options.<sup>23</sup>

Notably, one nonprofit initiative developed with the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health – Meatless Monday – is becoming prevalent on college campuses, and many campuses outside our city are going beyond just one day a week of vegetarian and vegan options.<sup>24</sup> For instance, McGill University in Montreal, Canada found its Meatless Monday program to be a success. Indeed, even students who were not vegetarian or vegan appreciated the meatless offerings, and could apply what they were learning in the classroom about the environmental significance of

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<sup>21</sup> CBS News, *NYC Public School Adopts All-Vegetarian Menu, May Be Country's First*, May 1, 2013, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/nyc-public-school-adopts-all-vegetarian-menu-may-be-country-s-first/>.

<sup>22</sup> Natalia Lima, *Second Public School in the U.S. Goes Vegetarian*, ECORAZZI.COM (Feb. 12, 2015), <http://www.ecorazzi.com/2015/02/12/second-public-school-in-the-u-s-goes-vegetarian/>.

<sup>23</sup> Emily Atteberry, *Increasing Number of Vegan Students Reflect National Shift*, USA TODAY COLLEGE (April 4, 2012), <http://college.usatoday.com/2012/04/04/increasing-number-of-vegan-students-reflect-national-shift/>.

<sup>24</sup> McKenzie Hall, RD, *Campus Dining – More Universities Are Serving Healthier Cuisine to Students*, TODAY'S DIETITIAN (May 2013), available at <http://www.todaysdietitian.com/newarchives/050113p18.shtml>.

meat production.<sup>25</sup> Cabrini College in Pennsylvania similarly augmented its Meatless Monday program with nutrition education, including through cooking demonstrations, educational materials, and speakers. The college now has a dedicated vegan and vegetarian food station daily in its student restaurant.<sup>26</sup>

### **Hospitals**

Many hospitals often do not accommodate requests for vegetarian or vegan meals. For instance, less than one-third of hospitals offer a salad bar or vegetarian entrée every day, according to a 2005 study surveying 40 hospitals conducted by the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, a nonprofit organization that promotes vegetarianism. And when hospitals do have vegetarian options, those meals are often high in fat, sodium and cholesterol.<sup>27</sup> As a result, hospitalized vegan and vegetarian New York City residents often eat only a small portion of the meal provided. These patients in turn often find their recovery jeopardized.<sup>28</sup>

We accordingly urge the City to take action to ensure the provision of vegetarian and vegan meals in all city hospitals. Notably, some hospitals outside our city are taking an innovative role in providing better meals to all of their patients. For instance, Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, which, much like New York City hospitals, is located in an urban area and serves people from diverse racial and socio-economic backgrounds, inputs its patients' diet orders into special nutrition software to customize a meal plan for each patient.<sup>29</sup> Upon arriving at Johns Hopkins Hospital, patients note allergies and preferences on their intake forms, and, during evaluations, nurses follow up again about patients' food restrictions and preferences.<sup>30</sup> About 400 patients per week make meal requests.<sup>31</sup>

In a place as diverse as New York City, a diverse hospital meal plan would make the city stronger and more equitable. Everyone who enters a city hospital deserves the chance to heal with food options that do not violate their beliefs or put their health at risk.

### **III. SHELTERING OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE VICTIMS WITH PETS**

We urge you to take a leadership role in supporting initiatives and legislation that improve access to sheltering and related support services for all domestic violence victims, including victims with pets. Perpetrators of domestic violence and child abuse often target family pets to victimize

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<sup>25</sup> *Id.*

<sup>26</sup> *Id.*

<sup>27</sup> *DC Area Hospitals Struggle to Meet All Dietary Requests*, AMERICAN OBSERVER.NET, <http://wp11.americanobserver.net/2012/03/dc-area-hospitals-struggle-to-meet-all-dietary-requests/>.

<sup>28</sup> Megan Salazar, *Vegetarians in the Hospital: How to Make the Most of Your Stay With the Nutrition You Need*, THE VEGETARIAN RESOURCE GROUP BLOG (Nov. 15, 2011), <http://www.vrg.org/blog/2011/11/15/vegetarians-in-the-hospitalhow-to-make-the-most-of-your-stay-with-the-nutrition-you-need/#sthash.GZJmJo62.dpuf>.

<sup>29</sup> *DC Area Hospitals Struggle to Meet All Dietary Requests*, AMERICAN OBSERVER.NET, <http://wp11.americanobserver.net/2012/03/dc-area-hospitals-struggle-to-meet-all-dietary-requests/>.

<sup>30</sup> *Id.*

<sup>31</sup> *Id.*

children and other family members. And domestic violence victims may remain in an abusive environment if safe housing does not permit pets.<sup>32</sup> Studies of domestic violence victims seeking shelter services show that up to 48% of victims have delayed leaving a dangerous situation because they were afraid for the safety of their pets<sup>33</sup> and 71% of victims who were pet owners revealed that abusers had threatened, harmed or killed their pet.<sup>34</sup> Additionally, family pets have been found to be a source of comfort and stability to victims of domestic violence and their children. Accordingly, the availability of resources and support for victims of domestic violence with pets is often necessary for the safety and well-being of the entire family unit.

The Committee has identified two specific issues that could benefit greatly from mayoral leadership and support in this area: (1) co-sheltering for victims of domestic violence and their pets as a model to encourage pet retention for victims of domestic violence and housing crises; and (2) collaboration between human services and animal welfare programs funded by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH). Both issues can have an important and profound impact with respect to the most vulnerable pet owners in New York City.

### **Co-Sheltering**

Building upon recent successes, such as New York's emergency preparedness effort in offering co-sheltering for people and their pets during Hurricane Sandy, your office might increase the availability of co-sheltering programs for domestic violence victims with pets, so that pet owners no longer have to choose between their personal safety and that of their beloved pets.

There are about 24 shelters in the country that allow pets to accompany victims of domestic violence and about 100 more that have kennels at the shelter.<sup>35</sup> In New York City, only one shelter allows pets.<sup>36</sup> The shelter was opened in 2013 by the Urban Resource Institute's URIPALS program in cooperation with the Mayor's Alliance for NYC's Animals.<sup>37</sup> In a city that serves about 9,000 domestic violence victims every year, there are only 27 apartments that allow pets.<sup>38</sup> Expansion of

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<sup>32</sup> See Domestic Violence and Animal Abuse, N.Y.S. Office for Prevention of Domestic Violence Bulletin (2010), [http://www.opdv.ny.gov/public\\_awareness/bulletins/summer2010/summer2010\\_bulletin.pdf](http://www.opdv.ny.gov/public_awareness/bulletins/summer2010/summer2010_bulletin.pdf). See also Morgan Baskin, *Many Domestic Violence Victims Stay for Their Pets – But They Don't Have To*, WASHINGTON CITY PAPER (July 14, 2016), <http://www.washingtoncitypaper.com/news/article/20828051/many-domestic-violence-victims-stay-for-their-pets-but-they-dont-have-to>.

<sup>33</sup> See Sherry Ramsey, Mary Lou Randour, Nancy Blaney & Maya Gupta, *Protecting Domestic Violence Victims by Protecting their Pets*, JUVENILE & FAMILY JUSTICE TODAY: A PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JUVENILE AND FAMILY COURT JUDGES 17 (Spring 2010) (citing Catherine A. Faver & Elizabeth B. Strand, *Domestic Violence and Animal Cruelty: Untangling the Web of Abuse*, 39 J. OF SOCIAL WORK EDUC. 237-253 (2003) and Pamela Carlisle-Frank, Joshua M. Frank, & Lindsey Nielsen, *Selective Battering of the Family Pet*, 17 ANTHROZOÖS 26-42 (2004)), available at <https://awionline.org/sites/default/files/uploads/legacy-uploads/documents/DV-NCJFCJArticleSpring2010-040611-1302122112-document-38932.pdf>.

<sup>34</sup> Frank R. Ascione, Claudia V. Weber, and David S. Wood, *Animal Welfare and Domestic Violence* (April 25, 1997), [http://www.vachss.com/guest\\_dispatches/ascione\\_2.html](http://www.vachss.com/guest_dispatches/ascione_2.html).

<sup>35</sup> Andy Newman, *Where the Abused, and Their Pets, Can Be Safe*, N.Y. TIMES (April 14, 2016), <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/17/nyregion/where-the-abused-and-their-pets-can-be-safe.html>.

<sup>36</sup> *Id.*

<sup>37</sup> *Id.*

<sup>38</sup> *Id.*

co-sheltering programs and resources through the New York City Office of Domestic Violence Services and other New York City domestic violence shelters is necessary to ensure that all victims of domestic violence – including people with pets – have access to sheltering and support for their entire family.

A co-sheltering initiative also lifts the weight from overtaxed animal welfare communities burdened with finding new homes for pets that already have families. Domestic violence victims currently have to surrender their pets, including to city animal shelters, before they can enter a domestic violence shelter. If domestic violence victims were not forced to separate from their pets, fewer animals would need the resources of city animal shelters.

### **Collaboration Between DOHMH Human Services and Animal Welfare Programs**

We also urge your office to facilitate collaboration between DOHMH human services and animal welfare programs in light of the many significant connections between human health and animal welfare.

In addition to DOHMH's responsibilities for a wide range of human health services in New York City, DOHMH has been designated as the agency responsible for dealing with the City's lost, strayed or homeless animals.<sup>39</sup> Since 1995, DOHMH has contracted with Animal Care and Control of NYC (AC&C) to effectuate these duties.<sup>40</sup> Due to the lack of coordination among agency programs, however, there have been significant missed opportunities that could benefit both people and animals in this City.

For example, where animal welfare programs have been solely focused on meeting the immediate animal welfare needs in an animal surrender, abuse or neglect case, related human issues afflicting the person surrendering the animal may not be adequately identified and addressed. Personal crisis issues like domestic violence, child abuse, homelessness or hospitalization, for instance, may be the impetus for surrendering an animal. By including questions about such personal crisis issues during the animal intake process, animal welfare programs can both assist and alert DOHMH human services departments, and/or the NYPD, to assist people in personal crises, thereby addressing core issues that lead to animal relinquishment.

Similarly, where human services programs overlook the presence of a pet in the life of a person in need of care, this is a missed opportunity to alert DOHMH animal welfare programs to address the immediate animal welfare needs of that person's pet – particularly while that person is undergoing services and is unable to care for the pet – and to identify and address latent personal crisis issues such as domestic violence and child abuse, which may present themselves in the form of animal abuse or neglect.<sup>41</sup> By including in DOHMH human services intake questionnaires

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<sup>39</sup> N.Y.C. ADMIN. CODE §§ 17-802–815.

<sup>40</sup> Animal Care & Control of NYC, New Hope Program, at 1 (March 2011), *available at* <https://nycacc.org/pdfs/NewHope/Eligibility.pdf>.

<sup>41</sup> For example, as noted above, in one national study, 71% of abused women said their partners harmed, killed or threatened pets. Frank R. Ascione, Claudia V. Weber, and David S. Wood, *Animal Welfare and Domestic Violence* (April 25, 1997), [http://www.vachss.com/guest\\_dispatches/ascione\\_2.html](http://www.vachss.com/guest_dispatches/ascione_2.html). Another national study indicated that abused animals were found in 60% of homes where child abuse or neglect was found and in 88% of homes of families where physical child abuse occurred. Elizabeth DeViney, Jeffery Dickert, & Randall Lockwood, *The Care of Pets*



questions about the presence of a pet in a person's life, including the current status of the pet and any indications of animal abuse or neglect, human services programs can both assist and alert animal welfare programs and/or the NYPD to address animal welfare concerns and related personal crisis issues.

By working together, DOHMH human services and animal welfare programs can assist people and animals in crisis and reduce animal relinquishment. There are multiple relationship-building ways to collaborate and address issues where human welfare and animal welfare are linked. As more individuals and families adopt and introduce pets into their homes, there is a need for greater education regarding pets, more access to low-cost services, and an increased need for support from many different avenues to encourage pet retention. Health programs throughout the City could begin to disseminate information within their facilities about pet care, including the importance of spay/neuter and vaccinations and other tips to reduce pet surrenders. In addition, families at risk for domestic violence, homelessness or hospitalization could be identified early to prevent pet relinquishment and linked to multiple services addressing the needs of the entire household, including family pets.

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We thank you for the opportunity to express our thoughts on how to improve the future of New York City and make it a more equitable city for its residents. We would very much appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss these and other ideas to make our city better and stronger for its residents and animals. We appreciate your leadership and interest in respecting all who need protection equally.

Respectfully,



Christopher Wlach  
Secretary, Committee on Animal Law<sup>42</sup>

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*Within Child Abusing Families*, 4 INT'L J. FOR THE STUDY OF ANIMAL PROBLEMS 3321-29 (1983), available at [http://animalstudiesrepository.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1014&context=acwp\\_awap](http://animalstudiesrepository.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1014&context=acwp_awap).

<sup>42</sup> Lori Barrett, Chair, recused herself from this letter.