



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 260

Resolution to recognize that animals are sentient beings entitled to respect and consideration, protection from abuse, neglect and cruelty, and the maximization of their welfare and calling upon the New York State legislature to pass a law similar to Oregon ORS 167.305.

By Council Members Rivera, Cabán, Hanif, Nurse, Restler, Ossé, Brannan, Gutiérrez and Richardson Jordan

Whereas, The term “animal” refers to any non-human living member of the biological kingdom Animalia; and

Whereas, federal and state laws that relate to animals relegate them to the legal status of property; and

Whereas, The legal status of animals often permits and allows them to be treated with less care and concern than they deserve; and

Whereas, Despite to their legal status as property, animals are also sentient beings; and

Whereas, Animals are capable of experiencing pain, stress and fear, as well as pleasure, equanimity and social bonds; and

Whereas, Animals are able to subjectively feel and perceive the world around them; and

Whereas, Animals have intrinsic value and deserve to be treated with compassion, and to enjoy a quality of life that reflects their intrinsic value; and

Whereas, Humans should honor the autonomy and self-determination of animals; and

Whereas, Humans who keep or care for animals have a duty to meet the needs of those animals in a holistic manner; and

Whereas, The City of New York strives to recognize and respect the sentience of animals; and

Whereas, The City of New York promotes the welfare and advances the rights of animals; and

Whereas, The City of New York attempts to provide proper and humane care, management and treatment of animals; and

Whereas, The City of New York is committed to preventing animal cruelty, and the abuse and neglect of animals; and

Whereas, The City of New York enforces laws for the purpose of protecting animals; and

Whereas, The City of New York considers the welfare of animals when making policy; and

Whereas, The City of New York treats animals with care and sensitivity; and

Whereas, International and domestic states recognize animal sentience in their governing documents and laws; and

Whereas, the European Union recognizes animals as sentient beings in Article 13 of the Lisbon Treaty; and

Whereas, In 2013, Oregon passed ORS 167.305, which recognized that animals are sentient beings capable of experiencing pain, stress, and fear, and that animals should be cared for in ways that minimize pain, stress, fear and suffering; and

Whereas, In 2015, Colombia, France, New Zealand and the Canadian province of Quebec each amended their laws to recognize animals as sentient beings; and

Whereas, In 2018, Slovakia amended its civil code to define animals as living beings rather than things; and

Whereas, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium and Portugal have each enshrined animal sentience as a legal principle; and

Whereas, the City of New York should be an example of compassion and follow the lead of other governments to acknowledge the sentience and inherent worth of all animals; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York recognizes that animals are sentient beings entitled to respect and consideration, protection from abuse, neglect and cruelty, and the maximization of their welfare,

and calls upon the New York State legislature to pass a law similar to Oregon ORS 167.305.

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