Humane Education Advocates Reaching Teachers (HEART)
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Council Members and Animal Advocacy Groups Seek Enforcement of Humane Education Law

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 22 – New York City Council Member Tony Avella has introduced a resolution urging the New York City Department of Education to help schools comply with New York State's humane education law by issuing an informative memo to all public schools in the city. Enacted in 1947, New York's humane education law requires instruction in the humane care and treatment of animals. Unfortunately, according to representatives from Humane Education Advocates Reaching Teachers (HEART) and the League of Humane Voters of New York City (LOHV-NYC), the law has not been enforced and few educators know of its existence.

Avella says, "I am proud to be the author of this very important resolution. It is imperative that in addition to providing our children with a solid educational foundation in math, reading, history and science, we must also give them the tools to be compassionate and responsible members of our society. Instruction on the humane care and treatment of animals will go a long way in helping our children reach that goal."

"We are very pleased that Council Member Avella agreed to sponsor this resolution to help raise awareness about the law and the value of humane education in cultivating empathy and compassion in our youth toward all living beings," says Meena Alagappan, Executive Director of HEART, adding that "teachers and administrators have been extremely receptive to incorporating humane education into their curricula when they learn about the statute and the benefits of humane education."

"In New York City, tens of thousands of healthy pets are killed in city-funded shelters every year and there are countless cases of animal cruelty and exploitation," said John Phillips, LOHV-NYC's Executive Director. "Our schools must start obeying this 59 year old

law and start teaching children from a young age what it means to be humane."

"The ASPCA is extremely pleased that this resolution has been introduced, making humane education a priority for school-age children," says ASPCA president Ed Sayres. "We congratulate Councilman Avella on this initiative; such initiatives are vital to our mission of providing effective means for the prevention of cruelty to animals. Instilling the sentient nature of animals into young minds is a critical step forward."

Avella's Resolution 497 also mentions studies confirming the strong correlation between childhood animal cruelty and later interpersonal abuse. "Humane education serves as a deterrent to violence and helps break the cycles of violence against humans and animals" said Alagappan.

Avella's resolution also identifies HEART, the ASPCA, the International Institute for Humane Education, and Roots and Shoots of the Jane Goodall Institute as organizations that can help schools comply with the humane education law and assist schools in utilizing staff development days to train teachers in how to implement humane education in their classes.

Twelve other Council Members have already signed onto Council Member Avella's resolution in the first week since its introduction on September 13th.

For more information on HEART, visit www.teachhumane.org or call (212) 744-2504. For information on the LOHV-NYC, visit www.humanenyc.org or call (212) 889-0303.