

**Proposed Chicago City Council Resolution re: USDA Standards for Elephants**

Whereas the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) inspects and licenses animal exhibitors and enforces the federal Animal Welfare Act (AWA); and

Whereas the AWA of 1966 and its amendments were a conscious effort on the part of the United States government to enforce minimum standards and requirements in the absence of human sensitivity and ethical responsibility; and

Whereas the USDA's implementation of AWA standards for space (9C.F.R. §3.128) and regulations for training and handling (9C.F.R. §2.131) do not meet the physical and psychological needs of elephants; and

Whereas the USDA's implementation of AWA standards for space allows licensees to keep elephants, who can weigh in excess of 13,000 pounds and in nature often walk 30 miles a day, in environments where they often develop poor condition, debility, stress, or abnormal behavior patterns; and

Whereas a 34-year study of 2,000 individual free-ranging elephants revealed that wild elephants do not develop foot problems and they are not seen swaying rhythmically back and forth; and

Whereas the primary cause of the suffering and premature death of elephants in captivity is foot disorders and arthritis caused by long hours of standing on hard substrates, contamination resulting from standing in their own waste, and forced inactivity caused by lack of sufficient space; and

Whereas elephants suffering from chronic foot disorders and arthritis can improve significantly or recover completely from these debilitating conditions when provided with adequate space and appropriate substrates and proper medical care; and

Whereas the USDA's implementation of AWA standards for space allows licensees to subject elephants to prolonged chaining; and

Whereas chaining elephants limits the animals' activity, often prevents natural behaviors such as socializing, can promote stereotypic behavior and aggression toward keepers, and has been linked to foot disorders, arthritis, and colic, sometimes leading to death; and

Whereas the USDA's implementation of AWA regulations for training and handling that permits the use of bullhooks and electric prods is a form of physical abuse that causes elephants to experience trauma, behavioral stress, physical harm, and unnecessary discomfort; and

Whereas the USDA's implementation of AWA regulations for training and handling allows licensees to strike elephants with bullhooks and shock elephants with electric prods; and

Whereas quality research reveals that natural elephant society is a positive and supportive environment in which elephants are protected, comforted, and reassured but never subjected to corporal punishment; and

Whereas the AWA must increase directives for the proper relocation methods for elephants, requiring exquisite planning and implementation to ensure elephant well being;

Now therefore be it resolved by the City Council of Chicago that:

(a) The USDA issue a policy improving standards for space and regulations for training, transportation and handling to better address the physical and psychological needs of elephants by:

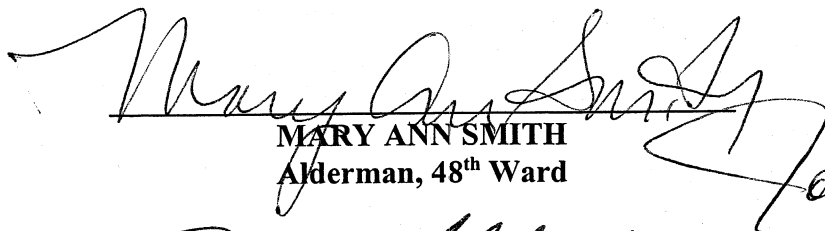
(1) Defining adequate space for indoor and outdoor enclosures as large enough to allow captive elephants to exercise similarly to how elephants exercise in the wild with appropriate surfaces that eliminate or reduce elephant contact with hard, unyielding surfaces; and

(2) Prohibiting the use of control and training devices such as bullhooks, electric prods and chaining, and

(3) Prescribing and requiring best practices for responsible elephant management, transportation and care, based on updated research and information.

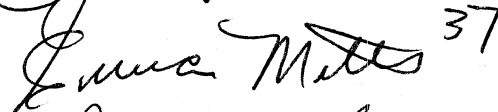
(b) The Chicago City Clerk will immediately send this resolution to the Illinois delegation and USDA.

(c) The City Council requests that the Illinois Congressional delegation pursue improvement of USDA standards according to information stated herein.

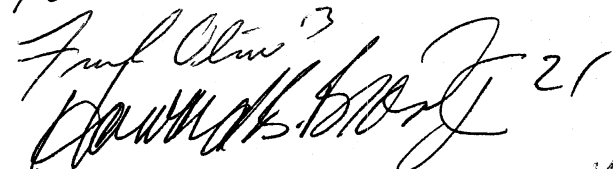
  
MARY ANN SMITH  
Alderman, 48<sup>th</sup> Ward

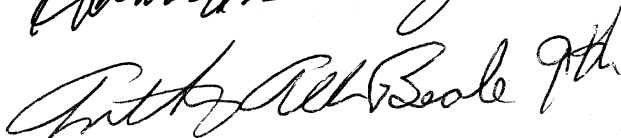
  
Bernard Williams 50

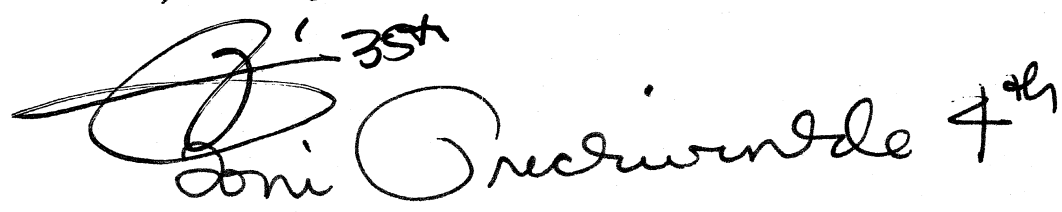
  
James 37

  
Emma Mitts 37

  
Rick 22

  
Frank 13  
David 21

  
Anthony 9<sup>th</sup>

  
Toni 35<sup>th</sup>  
Toni 4<sup>th</sup>

  
Ray 31<sup>st</sup>