

Dear Council Members,

I urge you to carefully consider the broader implications of Item 6 – Support for Animal Rights Activists.

While I think the work of these activists is important, I do not think the Council should be voicing an opinion on this issue for several reasons.

First, this is a complex issue. Drug research relies on animal testing. Would Council also approve the trespassing and stealing of animals involved in clinical research? Would Council also support bans on stem cell research, which many people believe is wrong as it involves human stem cells?

While I certainly do not support animal abuse, we live in a very complicated world where animals have been incorporated into our capitalist system in many ways that do not reflect our feelings and belief about the treatment of animals. If this is a cut and dry issue for Council, then they would have support other “liberations” of animals that involve a variety of practices such as clinical drug trials.

Second, the language here can easily be extended to fetuses and could then give legitimate trespass rights to anti-choice activists. If we simply use this proclamation and replace “non human animal” with “fetus with a heartbeat,” you could be writing a bill that justifies trespassing and theft on clinics which perform abortions after 6 weeks. If you read anything about heartbeat bills, you will see an similarity.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heartbeat_bill

The anti-choice movement has been trying to stop legal abortion since Roe V. Wade was passed in 1973. Fifty years later, they have been very successful. I am sure they will be watching trials such as the one mentioned in the Resolution very closely. Language that was used at last Council meeting by activists such as “sentient being” instead of chicken could easily be co-opted by anti-abortion activists who support Heartbeat bills.

Lack of access to abortion and reproductive health care and reproductive choice greatly impacts low income women of color, teenage women and women who live in rural communities.

While I know that these activists are frustrated by the process of changing the laws via established routes, it is not wise to legitimate their activities as it could easily give leeway to people who have other issues, which they are passionately committed.

Laws against trespass protect laboratories, chicken farms, elected officials, judges and all citizens. You do not want to jeopardize this equal protection as it creates chaos and gulfs in our mutual safety. You cannot allow people to trespass because you are sympathetic to their cause. When you allow one group to trespass, it opens us all up to trespass.

While I am sympathetic to these activists and their concerns, they should not have broken the law. In this case, the old adage is true – two wrongs don't make a right. The bureaucracy of our government is cumbersome and at times, unfair. Yet, we can't abandon the process we have in favor of lawlessness because then we will end up in dictatorship or anarchy, neither of which is desired.

I urge Council to think about all the implications of this Resolution and to vote against it. I urge the Council Members who are aligned with these activists to take a personal stand with them and not use their office for this particular purpose.

While I know that Council members feel that this Resolution will help the defendants receive a more lenient sentence if they go to trial, you should be writing letters as citizens and not Council Members.

Best,
Kate Haug