

Communication from Public

Name: Rowell Ranch Pro Rodeo / Russ Fields
Date Submitted: 03/04/2021 03:35 PM
Council File No: 20-1575
Comments for Public Posting: Please find attached comments from the Rowell Ranch Pro Rodeo regarding item 20-1575 on the February 23, 2021 council agenda regarding a rodeo ordinance.

ROWELL RANCH RODEO, INC.

Every Year in May

Road to 100 Years

Los Angeles City Councilmembers
200 N Spring St,
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Councilmembers:

As the president of the Rowell Ranch Pro Rodeo in Castro Valley, California (Hayward), and a longtime cattle rancher I was very disappointed to see that each of you chose to vote in favor of banning electric prods, spurs and flank straps used in rodeos within your city limits last week. We realize we don't live in Los Angeles, and we don't vote for you, but we are proud to be the real experts in the sport of rodeo and regret that you did not call upon us to give you the facts so you could make an informed decision.

We take pride in our sport and the stringent animal welfare standards we follow. For far too long now we have battled the lies and mis-truths about rodeo purported by self-proclaimed experts such as Mr. Eric Mills. Unfortunately, it seems it is often too much to ask that an elected official just take the time to call one of the many Professional Rodeo Cowboy Association (PRCA) sanctioned rodeos throughout our state and ask them to tell their side of the story. My apologies that we didn't get there to express our concerns to you in a timely manner. We do not follow the agendas of the Los Angeles City Council on a regular basis since it is outside of our community so we were not aware of your pending action.

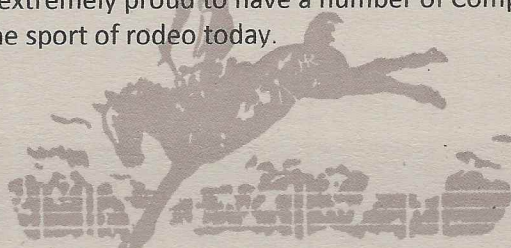
The ranchers and stock contractors that make a living by bringing a rodeo to your community work seven days a week and are on call 24-hours a day for the health and welfare of their livestock. A rancher's stock is his/her livelihood and despite what the "self-proclaimed experts" who pushed your city's new rodeo ordinance through your council last week would lead you to believe, the animals are very well taken care of and are not on their way to the slaughterhouse. Our livestock is highly valued and often worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. Our ranchers are some of the kindest, and most noteworthy people you can know. Their children grow up with self-respect, kindness and are well rounded with a strong respect for all lives.

We bring rodeo to the cities and urban areas throughout California (and America) because we want others to have an idea of the skills needed to be a rancher. Hoping others begin to understand the pride we take in our heritage and our ability to contribute to our state's significant agricultural industry by providing food to feed the world. We are fortunate rodeo has become a popular and growing professional sport that draws crowds of spectators to venues such as your Staples Center annually.

Our sport is diverse and includes not only cowboys and cowgirls but Hispanic and black cowboys and cowgirls who hold a significant presence not only in the history of rodeo and the American west but in today's events. This is especially worth mentioning since the Compton Cowboys consider themselves Los Angeles' Cowboys and illustrate that their ranch and horses have provided "camaraderie and a respite from violence." We are extremely proud to have a number of Compton Cowboys competing at the PRCA professional level in the sport of rodeo today.

2544 Castro Valley Boulevard
Castro Valley, California 94546
www.rowellranchrodeo.com

Tax ID # 501-C3, 94-242-9688



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Not only did your vote obviously concern me as a rancher and rodeo committee member, but the fact that each of you chose to cast your vote with only the input of a small group of activists was probably the most disappointing. We have always invited our opponents to come visit a rodeo so we can take them behind the scenes and show them firsthand how we safely and humanely manage our rodeo stock. We have had very few take us up on our invitation over the years. And we offer that same invitation to each of you. Those opponents who do take us up on the offer have always come away with an open mind and told us that it was nothing like they were told. We take the time to go through the flank straps, spurs, chutes and all of the equipment we use. We have nothing to hide.

The rodeos throughout California that are predominately all coordinated by volunteer committees work hard to make sure our state's agricultural and ranching heritage is not forgotten. We are sanctioned professional rodeos under the PRCA so we must follow their stringent animal welfare rules at all times. As non-profits we are proud to collectively contribute millions of dollars back into our communities. We support other nonprofits such as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Future Farmers of America and 4-H groups that offer all youth positive educational opportunities to enrich their lives.

It is only a small minority of people that don't care for rodeo that brought the request to ban prods, flank straps and spurs before you. We encourage you to take a step back and give us the time to speak our truth. The only good decision is a well-informed decision.

Thank you in advance for the time you took to read this letter and give my comments the consideration they deserve. We are available should you have any additional questions or need more information. And we invite you to join us for a tour of one of the more than 25 PRCA rodeos throughout California so you can learn firsthand about rodeo and make an informed and unbiased decision for yourself.

We would be honored to have the opportunity to speak with you before a final decision on the ordinance's language is made. Please contact me at (510) 581-2577 or RowellRanchRodeo@aol.com.

Sincerely,



Russ Fields, President
Rowell Ranch Pro Rodeo Committee

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