

Communication from Public

Name: South Robertson Neighborhoods Council
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Comments for Public Posting: The attached Community Impact Statement letter was approved by the South Robertson Neighborhoods Council at a duly noticed regular meeting on October 27, 2022 with a quorum present, by a vote of 12 yes, 4 no.



south robertson neighborhoods council

City of Los Angeles Certified Neighborhood Council

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September 15, 2022

Eric Garcetti,
Mayor City of Los Angeles

Paul Koretz,
Chair- Personnel, Audits, and Animal Welfare Committee
City of Los Angeles

Re: Treatment of Animals at City Shelters

Dear Mayor Garcetti and Councilmember Koretz,

Like most Angelenos, members of the South Robertson Neighborhoods Council were appalled and disappointed by the reports in the *Los Angeles Times* of mistreatment of animals in the care of the Department of Animal Services. It appears that the Department is understaffed and lacks skilled managerial leadership, and these shortcomings led to a profound breach of moral duty.

It is unfathomable how neither the PAAW Committee nor the Board of Animal Services Commissioners (made up entirely of Mayor Garcetti's appointees) gave any public indication of these problems and left it to a newspaper exposé and the honest words of volunteers to make these conditions known to the wider public. Smaller news outlets have documented these conditions before, including occupied animal living quarters overrun by rats.

The SORO NC has a liaison appointed to coordinate with the Department of Animal Services, but the Department has not communicated with Neighborhood Council representatives for years even before the pandemic.

Further, volunteers who were indefinitely "suspended" after speaking to the media must be immediately reinstated. Terminating highly skilled volunteers of longstanding who run shelter programs such as dog playgroups, train other volunteers, and walk the more challenging dogs materially and seriously harms animals in the shelters. Retaliation against employee whistleblowers is illegal, and retaliation against volunteers is obviously wrong and erodes trust in our City's governance structures.



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The City's leadership should also immediately consult with shelter volunteers on how to include them in discussions on solutions to the shelter system's problems. One option that could be considered is the formation of a volunteers' "Animal Services Advisory Committee," with representatives elected by the volunteers from each of the City's shelters.

The animals in the shelter system, the shelter volunteers, and the taxpayers, deserve the ethical treatment that would be provided by a better run department, and responsibility for delivering it falls to you and your appointees.

The SORO NC will gather more information on this situation and engage with the Department directly. However, it seems clear that responsibility for the situation and a plan for action needs to be forthcoming from the Mayor's Office immediately.

This letter was approved by the Board of the South Robertson Neighborhoods Council at a duly noticed regular meeting with a quorum present and voting on September 15, 2022.

Sincerely,

Michael W. Lynn

President
South Robertson Neighborhoods Council
President@soronc.org