



## Questions for Pittsburgh City Council District candidates:

1. HUMANE ACTION Pittsburgh is seeking to shape Pittsburgh into ‘America’s Model Humane City’. This means participating in an open dialogue on animal protection, working to end animal cruelty for all animals and passing protective legislation where needed.

What are your plans to protect animals and can you support the above statement?

**Answer:** I am proud to have advocated for ordinances that banned puppy mills and bullhooks in Pittsburgh. I pledge to keep an open mind and work with organizations like Humane Action to advance the rights of animals in Pittsburgh.

2. The resilience strategy “ONEPgh” calls for a 50% reduction of the meat consumed in our city by 2030. This is in keeping with the United Nations recommendation to combat climate change, which states: The #1 corrective action is to greatly reduce or give up meat entirely. This is more impactful to the environment than discontinuing the use of cars and airplanes altogether.

What are your plans to protect animals and the environment through meat reduction?

**Answer:** Promoting education efforts like ‘meatless Mondays’ and promoting vegan and sustainable food options is critical to helping people understand the impact of their meat consumption and reducing it.

3. Plastic pollution is a growing problem worldwide, and in the city of Pittsburgh. HAP’s “*no plastic please*” campaign works to end to single-use plastic wherever possible. We also encourage people to examine their dietary choices as approximately half of the plastic in the ocean is from commercial fishing.

What are your plans to reduce or eliminate plastic use in the City of Pittsburgh?

**Answer:** Although recycling can help reduce the amount of garbage that ends up in landfills, waterways and ecosystems, only a few types of plastics can be recycled by most municipal governments. The fraction that does get recycled still requires a lot of energy and water which just isn’t a good proposition when it comes to single-use items. Plastic garbage that ends up in landfills and oceans take hundreds of years to degrade, and there’s increasing concern about the toxins they release into the environment. Some of the things we can do are:

- Bring your own shopping bag
- Stop buying bottled water
- Bring your own thermos to the coffee shop

- Choose cardboard over plastic bottles and bags
- Stop using plastic straws
- Stop using disposable razors
- Switch from disposable diapers to cloth
- Rethink how to store food
- Shop in bulk

4. Our city has one of the worst wildlife trapping policies, meaning highest kill rate, for a city of our size in the United States. Residents have become used to calling Animal Care & Control to trap groundhogs, raccoons and skunks which must then be euthanized at taxpayer expense. For the most part, trapping is a temporary solution as other animals will fill the void, leading a cycle of trapping and killing.

Will you prioritize an education campaign for Pittsburgh residents that separates wildlife myth from reality and support a policy change to reduce the amount of needless trapping?

**Answer:** Yes.

5. The Pittsburgh Zoo is currently ranked the #2 Worst Zoo in the County for elephants. They are in violation of their lease with the City of Pittsburgh for failing to maintain AZA accreditation. Further, no satisfactory answer has been received from the Zoo or the City as to whether the Zoo is following city law, which bans the use of bullhooks and other instruments of pain on elephants.

What are your plans to ensure the Pittsburgh Zoo follows city law and regains their AZA accreditation?

**Answer:** Council, being legislative in nature, is responsible for the crafting of responsible legislation that leads to the humane treatment of animals. Enforcement, of course, falls to the administrative branch of government. However, that does not free us from our, Council's, responsibility to insist on implementation/enforcement and accountability in ensuring that the Pittsburgh Zoo follows city law and regains their AZA accreditation.

6. Please let our members know what you have done in the past to protect animals.

**Answer:** We have worked cooperatively with Humane Action to craft ordinances that ban the use of bullhooks and eliminated puppy mills operating within the city. In 2009 we shepherded the construction of the South Pittsburgh Off-Leash Exercise Park, and City Council sponsored animal adoption. I am truly honored to have been named the Humane Action Legislator of the Year for 2017 and 2018.