

A CEREMONIAL RESOLUTION

24-68

IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

July 13, 2021

To recognize and celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Humane Rescue Alliance, a local nonprofit organization in the District of Columbia that works to protect animals, support families, and advocate for positive change to create a world where all animals can thrive.

WHEREAS, the Washington Humane Society was chartered by the United States Congress in 1870 to protect the animals, and then later children, of the District of Columbia. At the time, animals were commodities used for food, transport, or sport and the Washington Humane Society was outfitted with only a bicycle for equipment;

WHEREAS, it was through the organization's innovative work, including legislative advocacy, public awareness campaigns, humane law enforcement efforts, and by providing direct community services and resources, that the District experienced a significant cultural shift in the way residents related to and cared for animals;

WHEREAS, the Humane Rescue Alliance (HRA) was created through the uniting of the Washington Humane Society, the Washington Animal Rescue League, and St. Hubert's Animal Welfare Center. HRA leverages the unique strengths of its legacy organizations in order to grow families through animal adoption, to protect animals from harm, and to provide programs and resources to help people and pets stay together;

WHEREAS, HRA serves as a single destination for pet-related needs for District residents, including: providing adoption services, support resources like free pet food and critical supplies, assistance with behavioral problems and veterinary care, low-cost vaccinations and spay/neuter surgeries, and animal control and humane law enforcement officers' assistance in caring for lost, injured, or abused animals;

WHEREAS, HRA has also always played a critical role in forming and improving animal welfare laws, both in the District of Columbia and on the federal level. In its first year of operation in 1871, the organization strongly advocated for the passage of the first animal cruelty law in the District. Most recently, HRA supported the passage of the Preventing Animal Cruelty and Torture Act, signed into law in 2019, which made acts of animal cruelty a federal crime;

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WHEREAS, through its 2 campuses in the District of Columbia, 19 animal control contracts, and direct care, rescue, and community-based services, HRA has grown into the largest animal services provider in the region, touching the lives of over 100,000 animals annually;

WHEREAS, every year, the organization's dedicated humane law enforcement officers investigate more than 1,800 complaints of animal cruelty, respond to cruelty complaints 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and rescue hundreds of dogs, cats, turtles, birds, and any other species of animal found in the District suffering from neglect and abuse;

WHEREAS, HRA's reach empowers it to reimagine the traditional sheltering system and tackle the most difficult issues facing animals and the people who love them. HRA is also building a national alliance that weaves together a safety net for vulnerable people and animals to address the sheltering challenges of today while working toward solutions for tomorrow; and

WHEREAS, HRA's work is anchored in the belief that everyone deserves the love and affection that comes from sharing their lives with a pet, that every animal is an individual, and the emphasis that animals and their families are deserving of specialized care and services.

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this resolution may be cited as the "Humane Rescue Alliance 150th Anniversary Recognition Resolution of 2021."

Sec. 2. The Council of the District of Columbia honors the Humane Rescue Alliance's work and commitment to helping animals in need over the past 150 years. This organization, which has always been headquartered in our Nation's Capital, has weathered 2 pandemics, civil unrest, the Great Depression, multiple wars, economic disparity, violence, and speciesism. Yet the work always continued, and its mission always endured. Today, it is moving forward with ambitious plans to help even more animals, support more families, and advocate for greater protections for animals and the people who love them for the next century and more.

Sec. 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately.