



June 13, 2020

Chairperson Kevin Ensley and Haywood County Commissioners

Sent via email: kevin.ensley@haywoodcountync.gov, brandon.rogers@haywoodcountync.gov, kirk.kirkpatrick@haywoodcountync.gov, tommy.long@haywoodcountync.gov, mark.pless@haywoodcountync.gov

Dear Chairperson Ensley and Haywood County Commissions,

We write to you today to urge you to uphold Haywood County's ordinance banning the private ownership of non-human primates, particularly in reference to the scheduled hearing on June 15th. Primates who live in human homes are a danger to those around them and struggle due to being forced to live in conditions highly inappropriate for their species.

Primates can never be domesticated. Petitioner Cynthia Gregory claims that capuchin monkeys are easily domesticated and is not aggressive. Attacks and injuries from privately owned monkeys are inevitable, and there are a range of zoonotic diseases that are transmitted by primates and can be harmful, even fatal, to humans.

Primates suffer in human homes. Monkeys are highly social beings who require the company of others of their own species to be healthy. Depressions, obsessive compulsions, and self-harming arise when primates are torn from their mothers years before they would naturally separate (this practice is common in the pet trade.) Diseases like diabetes and cardiac problems arise from diets "pet" monkeys are fed. Very often their teeth are removed so they can't hurt others when they bite, which limits their diets even further.

Though in the past, such monkeys have been used as "emotional support animals", the industry is unregulated and the claim that these monkeys may be registered as such is worthless. Many public and private organizations have realized the [fallacies](#) inherent in the service monkey industry. In 2011, the U. S. Department of Justice ruled that monkeys are not service animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs does not fund service monkeys for veterans. The American Veterinary Medical Association, the Humane Society of the United States and the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals also oppose the use of primates as service animals.

The North American Primate Sanctuary Alliance (NAPSA) is a coalition of nine of the leading primate sanctuaries on the continent who care for over 830 primates. Daily, we see how former "pets" primates suffer from their years spent in human homes. Please do the right thing for these monkeys and the humans who live around them by continuing to prohibit their ownership in Haywood County, and encourage their placement in reputable and accredited primate sanctuaries.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Erika Fleury', is written over a white background.

Erika Fleury, Program Director

NAPSA is a fiscally sponsored project of Community Initiatives, an Oakland-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.
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Visit our website at www.PrimateSanctuaries.org