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41st Annual
KINGDOM DAY PARADE
MONDAY, JANUARY 19, 2026
TELEVISED LIVE 11AM-1PM
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WORLD'S LARGEST & LONGEST RUNNING LIFE CELEBRATION OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING



April 28, 2025

The Honorable Ysabel Jurado
The Honorable Members of the Los Angeles City Council
City Hall, Room 395
200 North Spring Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

*Re: Urgent Call to Release Billy and Tina to an Elephant Sanctuary Rather Than the Tulsa Zoo;
Request to Waive Hearing Before Arts, Parks, Libraries, and Community Enrichment Committee;
Strong Support of Motion #25-0446*

Dear Councilmember Jurado and Honorable Members of the Los Angeles City Council:

The Congress of Racial Equality of California (CORE-CA), descended from one of America's oldest civil rights organizations, stands in unwavering support of transferring Billy and Tina to an elephant sanctuary rather than to the Tulsa Zoo.

The civil rights movement has taught us that injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. That lesson, echoed by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., compels us to act when we see suffering and systemic harm. In the words of Coretta Scott King, "One of the greatest things my husband, Martin, taught me was that we must keep moving forward, even if the path is difficult. And that includes widening our circle of compassion – to include all living beings." To ignore the suffering of Billy and Tina is to betray the very values of compassion, dignity, and moral responsibility that we exist to uphold.

Scientific evidence increasingly indicates that keeping elephants in captivity at zoos causes unfathomable emotional and physical suffering and often leads to premature death. The City of Los Angeles has an opportunity to show true moral leadership by closing the elephant exhibit, and transferring Billy and Tina to an elephant sanctuary. Transferring them to another zoo is cowardly and prolongs their suffering.

History offers a sobering parallel. In 1906, Ota Benga, a Congolese man, was exhibited in the Bronx Zoo, caged and displayed alongside primates. This dehumanizing act was justified under the guise of education. Today, we recognize such actions as abhorrent. Yet, that same rationale is now being used to justify a life sentence of tortured captivity of sentient, autonomous beings who have done nothing to deserve this cruelty other than being born elephants – a majestic species that attracts human curiosity. Let us not repeat the mistakes of our past, nor teach our children the wrong values. Transferring our elephants to another zoo is immoral, unjust and unacceptable in any civilized society—especially when a compassionate alternative is available, such as an accredited elephant sanctuary.

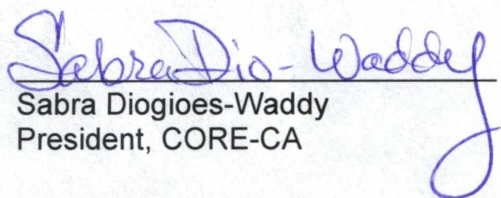
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We are also troubled by reports that the Los Angeles Zoo will not commit to wait until the pending motion is heard, and may instead attempt to bypass this body by unilaterally transferring Billy and Tina to another Zoo before the pending motion is heard. Because of this, time is of the essence.

We respectfully urge the Honorable Ysabel Jurado, Chair of the Arts, Parks, Libraries, and Community Enrichment Committee, to waive the hearing before her committee and allow the motion to be placed directly on the full Council's agenda at the earliest opportunity. Should the motion be delayed in committee, the Los Angeles Zoo may proceed with the transfer before the full Council has an opportunity to vote.

Los Angeles has a proud legacy of leadership in social progress. We urge you to continue that legacy by transferring Billy and Tina to a sanctuary rather than another zoo. Failing to act, and failing to act promptly, not only perpetuates their suffering, but aligns our city with a legacy of injustice we have worked so hard to overcome.

With deepest respect,


Sabra Diogioes-Waddy
President, CORE-CA



Dr. Adrian Dove
Chairman of the Board, CORE-CA