



**Agenda**  
**Health & Human Development Committee**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**St. Louis Board of Aldermen**  
**Thursday, July 10, 2025 - 9:00 AM**  
**Webinar**

President Megan Green  
Alderwoman Pamela Boyd, Chair  
Alderman Thomas Oldenburg, Vice Chair  
Committee Members:  
Alderwoman Sharon Tyus  
Alderwoman Alisha Sonnier

**Order of Business**

**I. Call to Order**

**II. Roll Call**

**III. Approval of Minutes**

Minutes of the Thursday, June 12, 2025, committee meeting

**IV. Board Bills for Review**

None

**V. Resolutions for Review**

None

**VI. Committee Discussions**

(The committee will discuss and take public comment on the following)

**Discussions Item Number 1**

Animal Control

The committee will hold a discussion with representatives from the City Animal Control about stray dogs, staff patrols and various other animal control-related issues.

**VII. Acknowledgment of Any Written Testimony**

**VIII. Announcements**

**IX. Excused Members**

**X. Adjournment**





**Minutes**  
**Health & Human Development Committee**  
**Thursday, June 12, 2025**  
**9:00 AM**  
**Kennedy Room**

**I. Call to Order**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

**II. Roll Call**

The Chair directed the Associate Clerk to call the roll, and the following members answered to their name: Ms. Sonnier, Ms. Boyd. 2 members were present. A quorum was not established.

**III. Approval of Minutes**

Minutes of the Thursday, May 15, 2025, committee meeting.

The Chair stated they would entertain a motion to approve the minutes of the Thursday, May 15, 2025, committee meeting.

Alisha Sonnier moved to approve the minutes of the Thursday, May 15, 2025, committee meeting.

Seconded by Tom Oldenburg.

The Chair directed the Associate Clerk to call the roll on the motion to approve the Thursday, May 15, 2025, committee meeting minutes.

The following voted Aye: Ms. Sonnier, Ms. Boyd, Mr. Oldenburg

The following voted No:  
None

The Following abstained:

None

The following were present but did not vote:

None

A total of Aye-3, No-0, and Abstained-0 were cast. The motion passed

#### **IV. Board Bills for Review**

#### **V. Resolutions for Review**

#### **VI. Committee Discussions**

(The committee will discuss and take public comment on the following)

Discussions Item Number 1

Rodeo Tool Ban

The committee will hold a discussion with local advocates from the Christian Animal Rights Association on the issue of a rodeo tool ban in the City of St. Louis on items like electric prods, flank straps, and spurs, etc

The Chair recognized Matthew King from Christian Animal Rights to speak about the Rodeo Tool Ban.

Mr. King delivered a PowerPoint presentation detailing the tools used to enhance bull performance in rodeos. He outlined the various tools and explained their impact on the animals, highlighting that they pose risks not only to the bulls but also to the spectators.

After no further discussion, the Chair opened the discussion up to members of the committee for questions and comments.

The committee asked questions and made suggestions.

The Chair thanked Mr. King for coming and providing information on the Rodeo Tool Ban.

No further discussion on this matter.

#### **VII. Acknowledgment of Any Written Testimony**

None

### **VIII. Announcements**

None

### **IX. Excused Members**

The Chair excused Ms. Tyus for necessary absence.

### **X. Adjournment**

Having no other business, the Chair adjourned the meeting by voice vote at 9:43 a.m.

**Minutes approved: Thursday, July 10, 2025**

**Minutes prepared by: Associate Clerk Rozlyn Smith**

# A Proposed Ban on Rodeo Tools in St. Louis

Matthew King

Christian Animal Rights Association

# Rodeos Events Defined

- Steer Wrestling (also known as bulldogging)
- Team Roping
- Calf Roping (also known as tie-down roping)
- Barrel Racing
- **Bull Riding**
- **Bronc Riding**

Depending on the organization or league, they may perform all, several, or just one of these activities at a scheduled event.

I'm going to focus on bull and bronc riding because they use harmful equipment like the flank strap and the electric prod.

# Rodeos in St. Louis

- Southeastern Rodeo Association, LLC (SERA)
  - Takes place yearly at Chaifetz Arena (this year - June 21, 2025).
  - Events: Bronc Riding, Steer Wrestling, Calf Roping, Barrel Racing, Ladies Steer Undecorating, Team Roping, Bull Riding and Junior Barrel Racing for kids.
- Professional Bull Riders (PBR)
  - Takes place yearly at the Enterprise Center (this year – December 7–8, 2025)
  - Events: just Bull Riding

# Bull Riding

- Bull riding is a rodeo event where a rider attempts to stay mounted on a bucking bull for eight seconds. The rider holds a rope around the bull's chest with one hand, and the other hand is free.
- The most popular rodeo event, there is an entire rodeo league called the Professional Bull Riders (PBR) that makes a spectacle out of just this one event.
- The bucking seen in these animals causes a great deal of long-term damage to their spines and pelvises. For instance [a 2017 study concluded](#), 'Results indicated bucking bulls were more likely than nonbucking bulls to develop horn and sinus disorders and musculoskeletal disorders of the vertebral region and pelvic limbs.'

# Bronc Riding

- Bronc riding involves riders attempting to stay on a bucking horse (bronc) for eight seconds. There are two types: bareback bronc riding and saddle bronc riding. In bareback, riders use a rigging attached to the horse's back; in saddle bronc, they use a specialized saddle. The rider's score is based on their skill and the horse's bucking difficulty.

# Bull and Bronc Riding is Emotionally Traumatizing

- [One notable source states](#), 'Based on observed behaviour, the evidence indicates that bull riding is a stressful, frightening experience for the bull: there is no evidence that the bulls 'enjoy' the experience.'
- [Another source states](#), 'Horses and cattle are prey animals and their reaction to being ridden in this way is the same as their reaction to being attacked by a predator, a situation where they experience increased fear, stress and panic.'
- [An entire veterinary coalition stated](#), 'Behaviours indicating distress during bucking events include mouth gaping, tongue protrusion, a fixed stare and eye whites in horses, and excessive, mucoid salivation, tail swishing, fixed stare, mouth gaping and tongue protrusion in bulls.'
- Animals sometimes get hurt in the arena, including broken legs and spines.

# Bulls and Horses Buck Because of the Flank Strap

- Bulls and horses do not buck in such an exaggerated fashion like this naturally – they do it because of the ‘flank strap’ – also known as the ‘flank rope.’
- This strap is designed to annoy the bull or horse and cause them to try to kick it off – which results in an exaggerated bucking behavior. Several studies indicate this:
  - [A study regarding bull-riding](#): ‘There is likely to be discomfort or irritation from the flank strap and the chest rope.’
  - [A study regarding bronc-riding](#): ‘There may be some discomfort to the horse from the rider and due to the presence of a flank strap.’

# Landmark Flank Strap Studies

- These animals buck because of the discomfort of the flank strap. For instance, [one report states](#), 'There has to be discomfort and pressure pain to the bucking horse with the flank strap just from the plain and simple nerve anatomy of the area involved. The animal is reacting to rid himself of this tormenting device.'
- [One study puts it very bluntly](#): 'The purpose of the flank rope is to produce an annoyance to the bull.'

# Bull Riding Pictures



# More Bull Riding Pictures



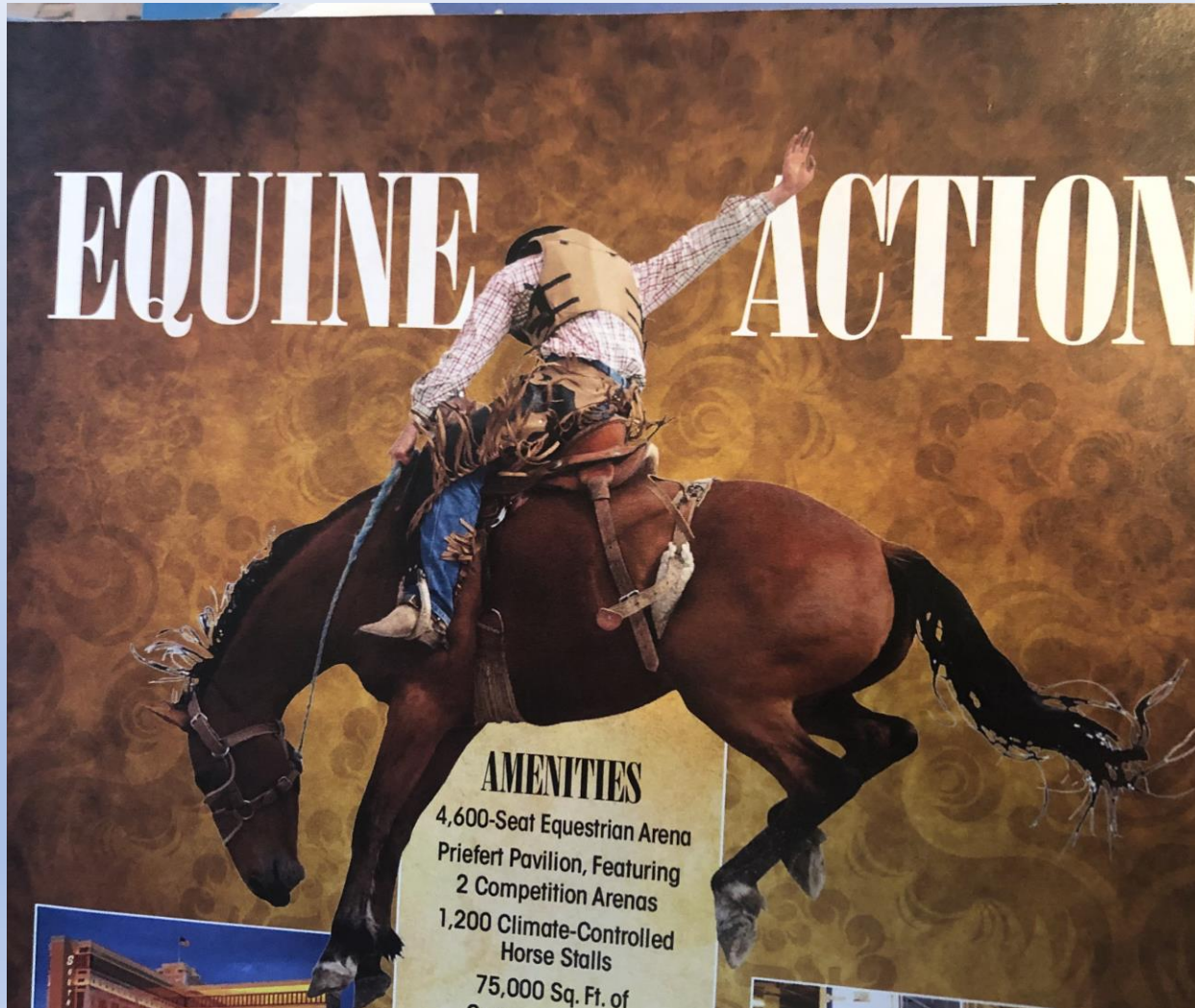
# One More Bull Riding Pic



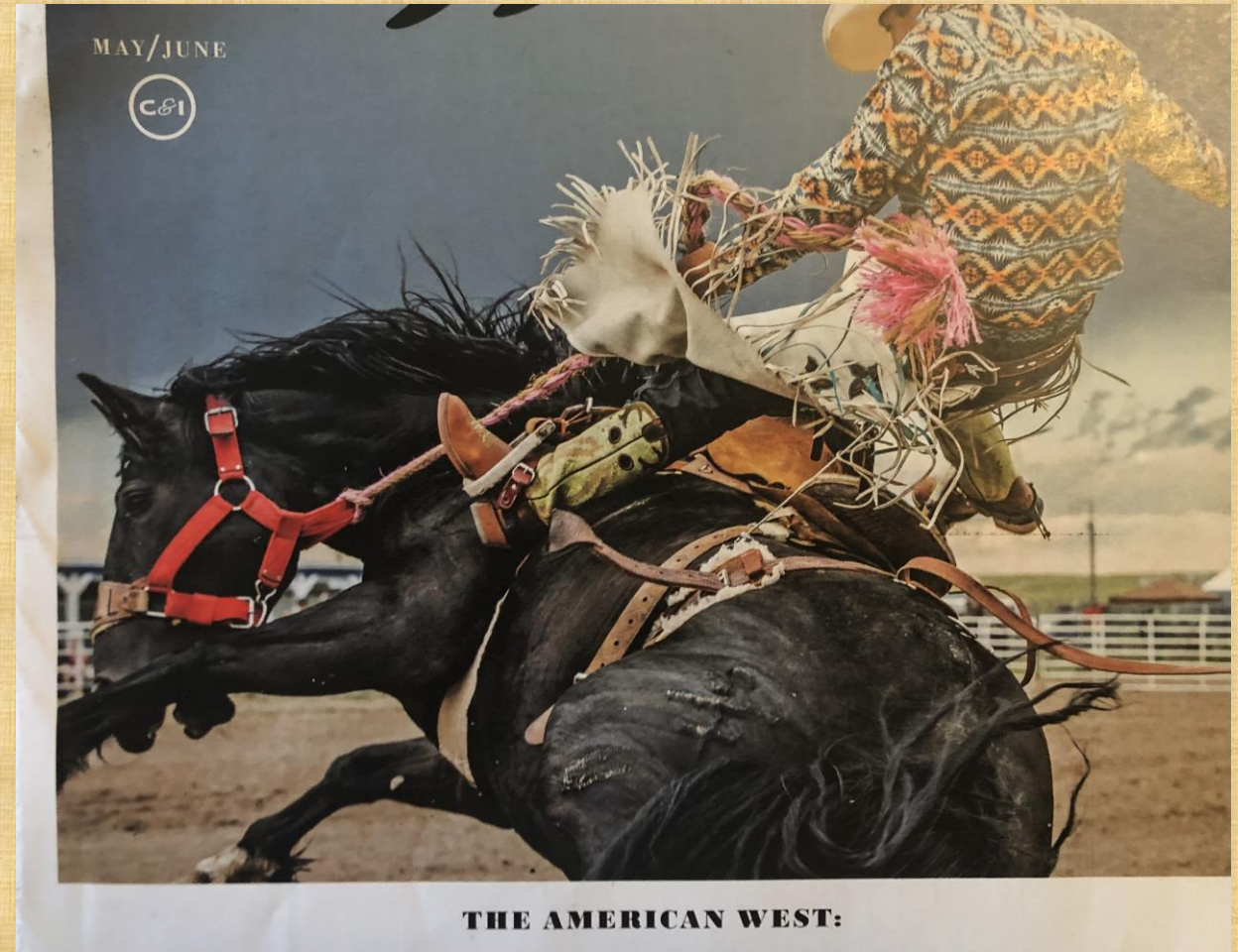
# Bronc Riding Pictures



# More Bronc Riding Pictures



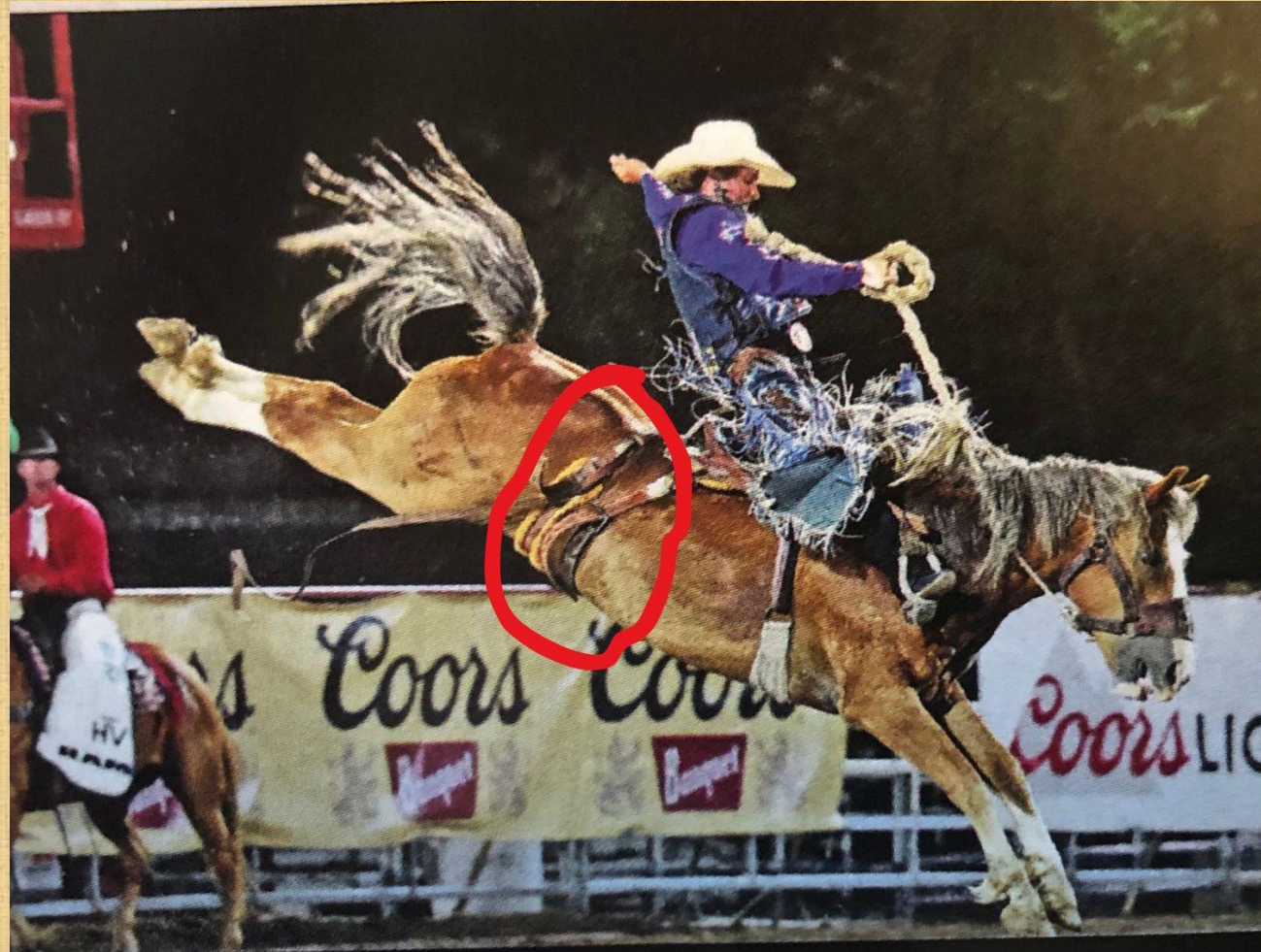
# Bronc Riding Pictures Again



# Bronc Riding Pics Continued



# Bronc Riding: The Flank Strap



Ryder Wright, saddle-bronc

# The Electric Prod

- The Electric Prod – also known as the ‘hotshot.’



# Use of the Electric Prod

- Electric cattle prods, also known as "hotshots," are sometimes used in rodeos, particularly in saddle bronc riding, bareback bronc riding, and bull riding, to help animals get to the chute and perform.
- [One credible source states](#) about rodeo, 'Cruel tools like the "hotshot" are used to make the animals perform. This is an electric prod that scares an animal into displaying abnormally dramatic reactions through intense pain.'

# Evidence of Harm Caused by the Electric Prod

- [A reputable scientific committee focused on animal welfare states](#), 'It is generally acknowledged that electric prods cause pain and stress and should therefore be avoided, if possible.'
- [One reliable source states](#), 'The "hot shot" will, at times, "draw blood" and will always produce skin damage.'
- [An entire veterinary coalition stated](#): 'Administering an electric shock to any animal causes suffering through pain and potential injury, which constitutes cruelty.'

# Animals Are Unwilling

- Many events involving animals involve the animals doing it willingly (like dog agility) – and this is evident by the fact that the animals do not require equipment to make them perform.
- These animals are obviously unwilling to do this; otherwise, the equipment would not be necessary. For instance, agility dogs generally love the activity, and this is further evidenced by the fact that they require no equipment on their body to make them perform. Rodeos (specifically bull and bronc riding), however, require the use of flank straps and electric prods to torment, annoy, discomfort, stress, and inflict pain on these bulls and horses to get them to perform against their will. Aptly, this coerced performance creates great distress for the animal.

# Distressing Animals with These Instruments Causes Harm to Humans Too

- Bull Riding is one of the most dangerous sports in the world.
- [According to one source](#), 'Rodeo athletes are injured or die at higher rates than athletes from any other sport. The bull riding injury rate is over 10 times the rate of injury in football and over 13 times the rate in ice hockey.'
- [According to a study](#), 'Meyers and Laurent found bull riding was responsible for the greatest proportion of rodeo injuries, accounting for 28 – 50% of all rodeo-related injuries. Subsequent injury rates included: saddle bronc and bareback riding events (20 – 23%), calf roping (3 – 12%), steer wrestling (8%), team roping (1 – 4%), and barrel racing (0 – 3%).'

# Bull Riding Can Cause Fatal Injuries

- Just this February (2025), [a bull rider had his jugular punctured by the animal's horn](#), which caused him to bleed profusely in front of the crowd. Surprisingly, he lived.



# Bull Riding Can Cause Death

- However, another participant wasn't so fortunate. [Just this April \(2025\), a young athlete was trampled to death by the bull he was riding.](#)
- Dylan Grant, a 24-year-old professional bull rider, died after being bucked off a bull and trampled during a Wharton County Youth Fair Xtreme Bulls event. Grant, who hailed from Laramie, Wyoming, was competing in the second round of the event when he was bucked off and suffered fatal injuries. He was rushed to a hospital in Houston, Texas, but unfortunately, died from his injuries.

# Rodeos are a Public Safety Risk

- [Rodeos have had numerous animals flee from the arena and cause havoc.](#)
- For instance, in 2022, a bull escaped a California rodeo and injured five spectators.
- In 2023, a rodeo bull escaped a Utah event and hurt two viewers.
- More recently, in 2024, a bull jumped the arena fence at an Oregon rodeo and injured several people.

# Animals Escape Rodeo Pictures



# Expertise: Veterinarian Perspectives

- ‘I am both an attorney and a veterinarian, who has treated both ranch and rodeo animals. In my youth, I rode bareback broncs in the rodeo. After law school, I worked as a state criminal prosecutor, where I witnessed how animal abuse leads to human abuse. Drawing on all of this expertise and experience, I can confidently say that rodeo is a cruel and archaic form of entertainment that should be outlawed.’

- **Peggy W. Larson, DVM, MS-Path., JD.**

# Expertise: What Veterinarians Have Said

- [An entire veterinary coalition states](#): ‘In contrast to this, rodeos normalise cruelty, supported by the legality and promotion of these events.... The inherent nature of rodeo events results in animal cruelty.’
- [The German Association of Veterinarians for the Protection of Animals](#) analysed video footage of bucking behaviour and recommended that bull riding should be prohibited.’
- [The RSPCA states](#): ‘All rodeo events will cause stress, fear and pain as well as injure animals for the sake of sport and entertainment. Subjecting cattle and horses to these experiences is not justified.’

# What Can Be Done? A Rodeo Ordinance

- This would not be controversial legislation.
- Many cities in the United States have restrictions or bans on rodeos.
- Outright vs. 'Tools of Torment' Ban
- **The Outright Ban**: prohibits the actual activities like bull riding, bronc riding, and other rodeo activities like calf roping.
  
- **OR**
  
- **The 'Tools of Torment' Ban**: permits rodeo activities like bull riding and bronc riding but not the tools that hurt animals and cause them to become aggressive (like flank straps and electric prods).

# Outright Ban on Rodeos

- [Some localities have banned rodeos altogether](#) like the California cities of Chino Hills, Irvine, Laguna Woods, and Pasadena.
- Likewise, [San Francisco and Napa County California have banned rodeo entirely.](#)
- [Other cities that have outright banned rodeos](#): St. Petersburg (Florida), Fort Wayne (Indiana), and Greenburgh (New York).
- [Los Angeles is on the cusp of outright banning rodeos](#): 'It shall be unlawful to organize or engage in any of the following activities for live public amusement or entertainment: Bareback Bronc Riding, Saddle Bronc Riding, Bull Riding, Calf Roping, Steer Wrestling, Team Roping, or any other activity that involves physically wrestling an animal to the ground, roping an animal, or attempting to ride and remain mounted on a bucking animal. This section shall not be construed to prohibit an equestrian, cultural, or other event, including an event described as a rodeo, that does not include any of the activities prohibited.'

# The 'Tools of Torment' Ban

- [This is a ban on equipment used in rodeos](#). The law doesn't ban rodeos outright but prohibits using painful techniques and devices that cause animals suffering, torment or injury.
- Leestown, Virginia - prohibits bucking straps and spurs
- Southampton, New York - prohibits bucking straps and spurs
- [Pittsburgh enacted an ordinance in 1992](#) that bans electric prods, flank/bucking straps, wire tie-downs, and sharpened or fixed spurs or rowels.

# Proposed 'Tools of Torment' Ban in New York City

- The term “rodeo” means any performance, competition, or exhibition in which skills traditionally associated with hired hands in the western United States who tend cattle and perform duties on horseback such as, but not limited to, riding bulls or broncos and roping animals, are performed.
- § 17-2302 Prohibitions during rodeos. a. No person shall engage in calf roping in connection with a rodeo.
- b. No person shall use a flank strap on any animal in connection with a rodeo.
- c. No person shall use an electric prod on any animal in connection with a rodeo.

# Our Recommendation

- We would recommend a ban on equipment like flank straps and electric prods. This would still allow rodeo events in St. Louis but would protect animals from torment, annoyance, discomfort, stress, and pain.
- Since the electric prod and the flank strap provoke animals to become aggressive, it would also protect athletes and spectators. Animals would be far less likely to escape the arena or become agitated without the harmful equipment.