

# Dane County Exec. Parisi: Statement on County Board Committee adoption of zoo resolution

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*County Executive Joe Parisi Issued the Following Statement Regarding This Evening's Passage of County Board Resolutions 607 and 629 by the Public Works and Transportation Committee:*

"Much has been said in the past 10 days about who is best to fundraise for the Henry Vilas Zoo. The differing perspectives on that resulted in a public discourse that caused unnecessary fear in our community. Earlier today, I was so grateful to see young families, grandparents, and a kids camp when I visited the Zoo along with County Board Chair Corrigan and County Board Supervisors. We were there to stand in solidarity, in support of our zookeepers and the animals they provide such great care for.

We were there to make sure moms and dads and kids know the Zoo is a place of fun, family togetherness, and education about important issues like climate change, species survival, and conservation.

That's what this is about. These are the shared priorities of the community I grew up in and raised my daughters in.

We have a responsibility to our Zoo and all who love it to call timeout on the public discourse. The time has come for an independent, objective analysis on what truly is best for fundraising at our Zoo. We've heard a lot of perspectives. Let's hear what's been effective at other zoos across our country and then decide on a model that fits the legacy of our zoo best.

We also have a responsibility to ensure our Zoo remains accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums. This evening's action in support of Resolutions 607 and 629 are the next steps in providing Dane County's Henry Vilas Zoo the staff and resources necessary to remain AZA accredited.

I'm grateful to the County Board of Supervisors, our incredible county zookeepers, and the countless others in our community who have stepped forward in recent days in support of Dane County's Henry Vilas Zoo."