



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

**Testimony in Support of HB 3494-1
House Committee on Human Services and Housing
April 10, 2015
By Scott Beckstead, Senior Oregon State Director,
The Humane Society of the United States**

On behalf of the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and our Oregon supporters, I am here to voice our support for the -1 amendments to HB 3494.

This bill is an important step toward eliminating the elective use of devocalization of dogs and declawing of cats, and ensures that those procedures are only performed when all other options have been explored and the veterinarian has carefully explained potential complications.

Declawing and devocalization are permanent, irreversible, and painful surgical procedures.

- The last digit on the cat's front feet are amputated, leaving the animal crippled and without the means to defend itself.
- Devocalization is an operation to sever or remove an animal's vocal cords or prevent the normal function of an animal's vocal cords. Devocalized dogs can develop a host of behavioral problems stemming from their frustration with not being able to communicate.
- These procedures are most often performed for the convenience of the owner and not the well-being of the pet.

Oregonians love their animals, and most want to do the right thing by their pets. Sadly, too often dogs are devocalized and cats are declawed as a matter of convenience by owners who may not be aware of the potential complications that can arise. There are a host of training techniques, behavioral modifications, and even readily available products to address the problems associated with excessive barking in dogs and destructive clawing by cats. Pet owners should be advised of these options before subjecting their animal to a permanent and irreversible procedure that is fraught with complications and unintended consequences.

For all of these reasons, The HSUS urges the committee to vote "yes" on HB 3494-1.