

Oregon Animal Advocates...please help and share before May 26, 2015:

Help defeat House Bill 3494 to protect dogs and cats from devocalization and declawing!

HB 3494 is titled "Prohibits declawing or devocalizing of animal unless procedure is performed by licensed veterinarian under certain conditions."

There is a public hearing for HB 3494 in Salem on 5/26/15 at 3pm. If you cannot attend in person, please submit a written testimony (the flaws and your concerns about the bill) and email to Committee Administrator Cheyenne Ross at [Cheyenne.ross@state.or.us](mailto:Cheyenne.ross@state.or.us) (503-986-1490) before May 26th, and your written testimony will be read by the members of the SHSEC (Senate Committee on Human Services & Early Childhood) who will be reviewing & possibly voting for the bill. And you can email or call Senator Sara Gelser (committee chair) at [Sen.sara.gelser@state.or.us](mailto:Sen.sara.gelser@state.or.us) and ask that she NOT bring HB3494 to a vote in her committee (503-986-1708), and why you are concerned. You can also write or call your own Senator to voice your concerns about the bill. And if you have the time and energy, you could copy your email to the other members of this committee- the Senate Committee on Human Services and Early Childhood (SHSEC)- members are: Senator Michael Dembrow, Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson, Senator Jeff Kruse. Vice-chair is Senator Alan Olsen, chair is Senator Sara Gelser.

Background of bill: HB 3494 would have originally prohibited landlords from requiring declawing or devocalization as a condition of tenancy. The current, radically amended version is a bogus "ban" on declawing that would do nothing to stop declawing or protect animals and would actually legitimize the unnecessary practice of declawing. Instead of a real, humane law prohibiting surgery on animal's vocal cords and amputation to the last knuckle, HB 3494 allows devocalization and declawing for reasons ranging from the owner's health to the owner's failure to manage his/her animal's behavior. All of these exemptions are unenforceable and baseless.

If passed, this bad bill will be used as a model bill for other states. The Paw Project has sponsored the only successful legislation in North America that prohibits declawing- and they have worked for over 15 years educating vets and the public.

Three very objectionable provisions (loopholes) of HB 3494 are:

- 1) Declawing and devocalization are "allowable if behavior modification fails, or allowed "as a last resort." Devocalization (cutting of the vocal cords) exposes animals to lifelong misery, risk of horrific death from choking or inhalation of food and liquids into the lungs. There is credible evidence that declawing causes behavioral problems that often land the cat in a shelter (biting and house-soiling). Declawing is illegal in many countries. Since becoming illegal in 8 cities in California, there has been NO increase in the number of animals removed from homes and put in shelters. This provision only promotes irresponsible pet ownership and breeding.
- 2) Declawing is allowed to "protect human health" or "allowable if the animal's claws present a danger to the owner's health." The CDC, NIH, Infectious Disease Society of America and the US Public Health Services have published statements that declawing of cats "is NOT recommended", even in cases with HIV positive owners. Claw caps are among many ways to protect the owner without harming the animal. If someone is worried about his/her health, then why do they own a cat or dog?! Cats have been reported to bite more after being declawed, since their first line of defense has been taken away. Bites can be more dangerous than a scratch.
- 3) "Allowable to treat an emotional issue." The ONLY ethical reason to cut vocal cords or toes is to treat a PHYSICAL ailment- a law that omits the word "physical" allows vets to declaw or devocalize for any reason, including "behavioral illness"! Barking/meowing and scratching are NOT pathological- they are normal behaviors that can become problematic when an owner ignores the animal's needs. Anxiety- triggered vocalization can be managed with medications. Cutting vocal cords increases distress and as the animal becomes more desperate, it can become more destructive.

The harmful repercussions of HB 3494 maybe irreparable!

Please help kill this horrible bill for our furry friends! I think it is a bit ironic that this bill is in the "Committee on Human Services"- how is harming animals going to help humans?!

I got most of my info from: <http://stopdevocalizing.weebly.com/oregon-stop-this-bad-law.html>

For more info on declawing: <http://www.pawproject.org/>