

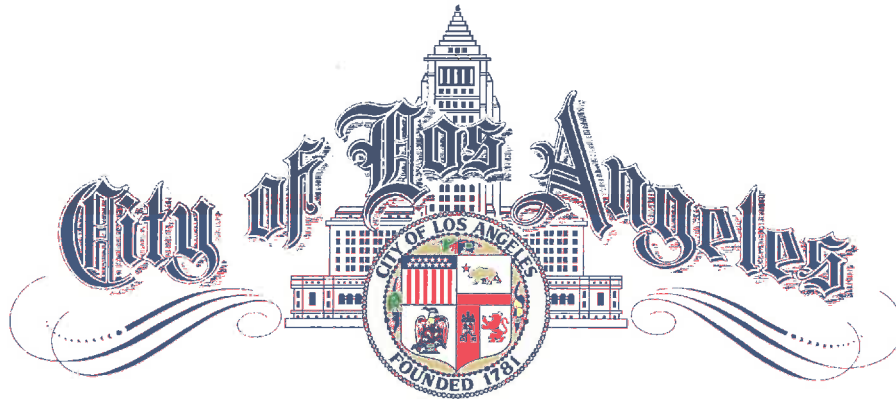
Committees:

Chair
Personnel & Animal Welfare

Vice Chair
Transportation

Member
Budget & Finance
Energy & Environment

Website: <http://cd5.lacity.org>
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Councilmember, Fifth District

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May 19, 2015

Honorable Sara Gelser
Senator, 8th District
State Capitol
900 Court Street NE, S-405
Salem, OR 97301

RE: HB 3494-A

Dear Senator Gelser:

I am writing to urge you to oppose HB 3494-A as currently written and to amend it to make it a meaningful prohibition on inherently inhumane procedures on cats and other animals.

While this bill purports to be a ban on the devocalization and declawing of cats, it actually is no prohibition at all. Instead, it is a complete abdication to veterinarians who would be able to unilaterally and arbitrarily decide when a situation warrants lifting the ban. This would explicitly begin with when the animal's owner essentially insists on getting the procedure done as an alternative to surrendering it to an animal shelter. That really is not a prohibition.

As the author of the City of Los Angeles' ordinance banning the de-clawing of cats, I can assure you that the issues being raised by proponents of HB 3494-A all were discussed during our process. At that time the Southern California Veterinary Medical Association admitted that its opposition stemmed not from any sort of health concerns but rather from a resistance to having its members' professional prerogatives challenged. We saw through that and we saw through the smokescreen of health concerns, and I hope you will too.

I understand that you have been warned that persons with AIDS and diabetes are placed at increased risk by being scratched by cats. As a diabetic and guardian of multiple cats myself, I can assure you that normal precautions are all that is required to prevent problems. Declawing, however, is NOT a normal precaution.



These health concerns – which essentially amount to a fear of “cat scratch fever” – are not supported by knowledgeable medical professionals who don’t have an agenda. For example, the Canadian Medical Association’s April 20, 2015, bulletin, “Reducing the Risk of Pet-Associated Zoonotic Infections,” specifically recommends against declawing as a prophylactic. The Centers for Disease Control, National Institute of Health, U.S. Public Health Service and Infectious Diseases Society of America have gone on record in agreement.

Declawing has been established in the United States as an alleged remedy of last resort for a variety of issues. Apart from the aforementioned and so-called health concerns, there are supposedly medical and behavioral justifications. But when we subject them to appropriate scrutiny, it becomes obvious that declawing is a remedy that can create as many, if not more, of the same kinds of problems as it purportedly solves. And, along with devocalization, it is an attack on the inherent nature of cats that is institutionalized as potentially a remedy of first resort by HB 3494-A.

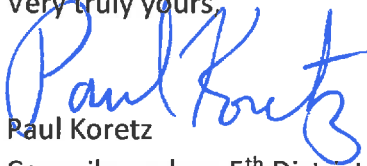
Last, but not least, is the empty nature of the argument that declawing keeps cats from being surrendered to shelters. If that were true, no declawed cats would end up in our over-crowded shelters to be euthanized or, if they’re extremely fortunate, adopted to a more compassionate new home. But millions of such cats do end up in shelters, often because of the unintended behavioral and medical consequences of the procedure that are every bit as undesirable to the cats’ owners.

As counterproductive as I believe HB 3494-A in its current form would be (including the possibility that it could be used as a back-door inspiration for those who wish to pre-empt legitimate laws such as the one I authored), I believe that the original HB 3494 was an earnest attempt to discourage unnecessary declawing. Its prohibition on landlords requiring declawing of cats as a prerequisite for allowing them to live in rental units would have been a constructive step for Oregon.

Now that the bill has evolved toward a different purpose I urge you to consider a version of it that would resemble the attached draft amended version offered by the Paw Project, a veterinarian-led organization that successfully engineered the adoption of anti-declawing laws in a number of California cities several years ago. This amended version protects cats (and other specified animals) in a way that the current HB 3494-A never will.

Again, please reject HB 3494-A in its current form and amend it so that it accomplishes a meaningful regulation of declawing and devocalization for the people and animals of Oregon.

Very truly yours,



Paul Koretz

Councilmember, 5th District

Encl.

Committees:

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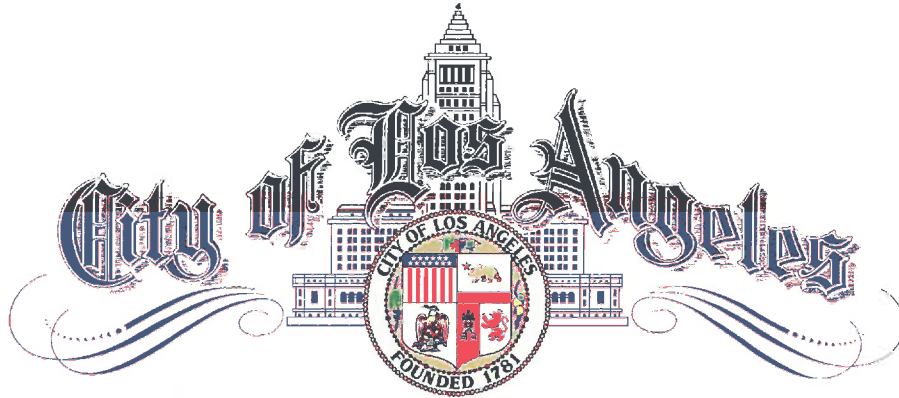
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May 19, 2015

Honorable Laurie Moines Anderson
Senator, 25th District
State Capitol
900 Court Street NE, S-413
Salem, OR 97301

RE: HB 3494-A

Dear Senator Anderson:

I am writing to urge you to oppose HB 3494-A as currently written and to amend it to make it a meaningful prohibition on inherently inhumane procedures on cats and other animals.

While this bill purports to be a ban on the devocalization and declawing of cats, it actually is no prohibition at all. Instead, it is a complete abdication to veterinarians who would be able to unilaterally and arbitrarily decide when a situation warrants lifting the ban. This would explicitly begin with when the animal's owner essentially insists on getting the procedure done as an alternative to surrendering it to an animal shelter. That really is not a prohibition.

As the author of the City of Los Angeles' ordinance banning the de-clawing of cats, I can assure you that the issues being raised by proponents of HB 3494-A all were discussed during our process. At that time the Southern California Veterinary Medical Association admitted that its opposition stemmed not from any sort of health concerns but rather from a resistance to having its members' professional prerogatives challenged. We saw through that and we saw through the smokescreen of health concerns, and I hope you will too.

I understand that you have been warned that persons with AIDS and diabetes are placed at increased risk by being scratched by cats. As a diabetic and guardian of multiple cats myself, I can assure you that normal precautions are all that is required to prevent problems. Declawing, however, is NOT a normal precaution.

These health concerns – which essentially amount to a fear of “cat scratch fever” – are not supported by knowledgeable medical professionals who don’t have an agenda. For example, the Canadian Medical Association’s April 20, 2015, bulletin, “Reducing the Risk of Pet-Associated Zoonotic Infections,” specifically recommends against declawing as a prophylactic. The Centers for Disease Control, National Institute of Health, U.S. Public Health Service and Infectious Diseases Society of America have gone on record in agreement.

Declawing has been established in the United States as an alleged remedy of last resort for a variety of issues. Apart from the aforementioned and so-called health concerns, there are supposedly medical and behavioral justifications. But when we subject them to appropriate scrutiny, it becomes obvious that declawing is a remedy that can create as many, if not more, of the same kinds of problems as it purportedly solves. And, along with devocalization, it is an attack on the inherent nature of cats that is institutionalized as potentially a remedy of first resort by HB 3494-A.

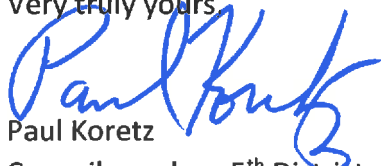
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As counterproductive as I believe HB 3494-A in its current form would be (including the possibility that it could be used as a back-door inspiration for those who wish to pre-empt legitimate laws such as the one I authored), I believe that the original HB 3494 was an earnest attempt to discourage unnecessary declawing. Its prohibition on landlords requiring declawing of cats as a prerequisite for allowing them to live in rental units would have been a constructive step for Oregon.

Now that the bill has evolved toward a different purpose I urge you to consider a version of it that would resemble the attached draft amended version offered by the Paw Project, a veterinarian-led organization that successfully engineered the adoption of anti-declawing laws in a number of California cities several years ago. This amended version protects cats (and other specified animals) in a way that the current HB 3494-A never will.

Again, please reject HB 3494-A in its current form and amend it so that it accomplishes a meaningful regulation of declawing and devocalization for the people and animals of Oregon.

Very truly yours,



Paul Koretz

Councilmember, 5th District

Encl.

Committees:

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Vice Chair

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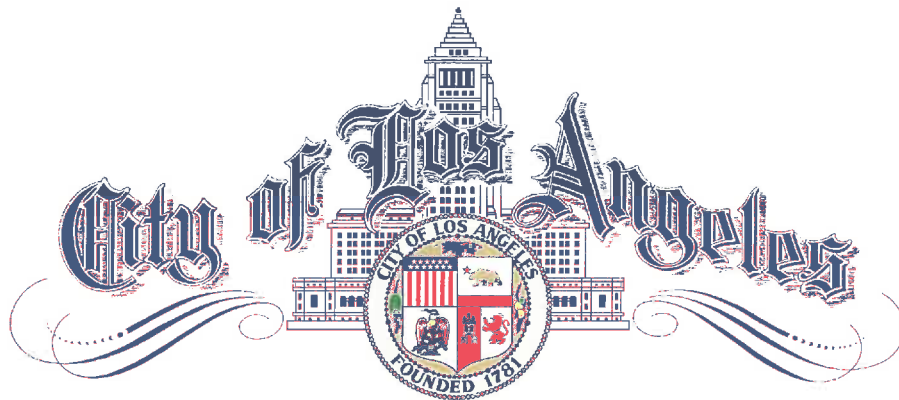
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May 19, 2015

Honorable Alan Olsen
Senator, 20th District
State Capitol
900 Court Street NE, S-425
Salem, OR 97301

RE: HB 3494-A

Dear Senator Olsen:

I am writing to urge you to oppose HB 3494-A as currently written and to amend it to make it a meaningful prohibition on inherently inhumane procedures on cats and other animals.

While this bill purports to be a ban on the devocalization and declawing of cats, it actually is no prohibition at all. Instead, it is a complete abdication to veterinarians who would be able to unilaterally and arbitrarily decide when a situation warrants lifting the ban. This would explicitly begin with when the animal's owner essentially insists on getting the procedure done as an alternative to surrendering it to an animal shelter. That really is not a prohibition.

As the author of the City of Los Angeles' ordinance banning the de-clawing of cats, I can assure you that the issues being raised by proponents of HB 3494-A all were discussed during our process. At that time the Southern California Veterinary Medical Association admitted that its opposition stemmed not from any sort of health concerns but rather from a resistance to having its members' professional prerogatives challenged. We saw through that and we saw through the smokescreen of health concerns, and I hope you will too.

I understand that you have been warned that persons with AIDS and diabetes are placed at increased risk by being scratched by cats. As a diabetic and guardian of multiple cats myself, I can assure you that normal precautions are all that is required to prevent problems. Declawing, however, is NOT a normal precaution.

These health concerns – which essentially amount to a fear of “cat scratch fever” – are not supported by knowledgeable medical professionals who don’t have an agenda. For example, the Canadian Medical Association’s April 20, 2015, bulletin, “Reducing the Risk of Pet-Associated Zoonotic Infections,” specifically recommends against declawing as a prophylactic. The Centers for Disease Control, National Institute of Health, U.S. Public Health Service and Infectious Diseases Society of America have gone on record in agreement.

Declawing has been established in the United States as an alleged remedy of last resort for a variety of issues. Apart from the aforementioned and so-called health concerns, there are supposedly medical and behavioral justifications. But when we subject them to appropriate scrutiny, it becomes obvious that declawing is a remedy that can create as many, if not more, of the same kinds of problems as it purportedly solves. And, along with devocalization, it is an attack on the inherent nature of cats that is institutionalized as potentially a remedy of first resort by HB 3494-A.

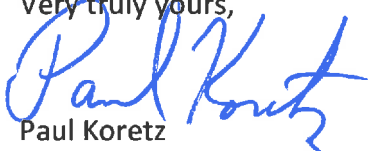
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As counterproductive as I believe HB 3494-A in its current form would be (including the possibility that it could be used as a back-door inspiration for those who wish to pre-empt legitimate laws such as the one I authored), I believe that the original HB 3494 was an earnest attempt to discourage unnecessary declawing. Its prohibition on landlords requiring declawing of cats as a prerequisite for allowing them to live in rental units would have been a constructive step for Oregon.

Now that the bill has evolved toward a different purpose I urge you to consider a version of it that would resemble the attached draft amended version offered by the Paw Project, a veterinarian-led organization that successfully engineered the adoption of anti-declawing laws in a number of California cities several years ago. This amended version protects cats (and other specified animals) in a way that the current HB 3494-A never will.

Again, please reject HB 3494-A in its current form and amend it so that it accomplishes a meaningful regulation of declawing and devocalization for the people and animals of Oregon.

Very truly yours,



Paul Koretz

Councilmember, 5th District

Encl.

Committees:

Chair

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Vice Chair

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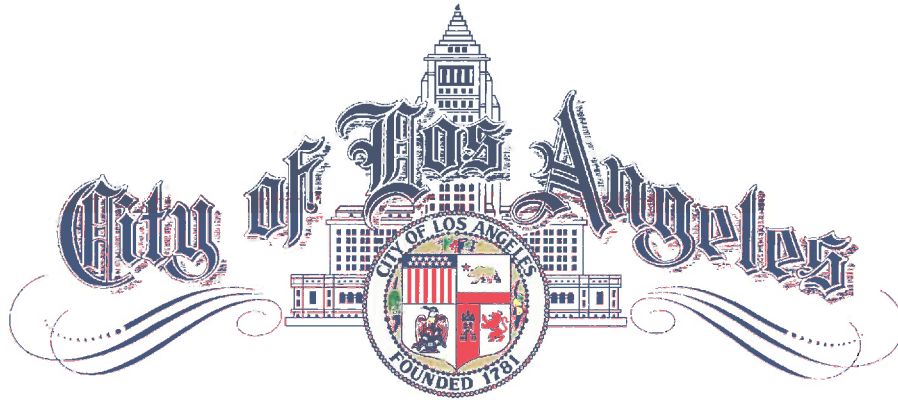
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PAUL KORETZ
Councilmember, Fifth District

May 19, 2015

Honorable Michael Dembrow
Senator, 23rd District
State Capitol
900 Court Street NE, S-407
Salem, OR 97301

RE: HB 3494-A

Dear Senator Dembrow:

I am writing to urge you to oppose HB 3494-A as it is currently written as well as to support amending it to make it a meaningful prohibition on inhumane procedures on cats and other animals.

While this bill purports to be a ban on the devocalization and declawing of animals, the fact is that it actually does nothing at all to prohibit these practices. Instead, it grants complete authority to veterinarians who would be able to unilaterally and arbitrarily decide when a situation warrants lifting the ban. This would explicitly begin with when the animal's owner essentially insists on getting the procedure done after claiming to have tried to control the behavior as an alternative to surrendering it to an animal shelter. That really is not a prohibition.

As the author of the City of Los Angeles' ordinance banning the de-clawing of cats, I can assure you that the issues being raised by proponents of HB 3494-A were all discussed during our legislative process. At that time, the Southern California Veterinary Medical Association admitted that its opposition stemmed not from any sort of health concerns but rather from a resistance to having its members' professional prerogatives challenged. We saw through that as well as the smokescreen of health concerns, and I hope you will too.

I understand that you have been warned that persons with AIDS and diabetes are placed at increased risk by being scratched by cats. As a diabetic and guardian of multiple cats myself, I have found from my day to day experiences with them that normal precautions are all that is really required to prevent problems. Declawing, however, is NOT a normal precaution.

These health concerns – which essentially amount to a fear of “cat scratch fever” – are not supported by knowledgeable medical professionals who don’t have an agenda. For example, the Canadian Medical Association’s April 20, 2015, bulletin, “Reducing the Risk of Pet-Associated Zoonotic Infections,” specifically recommends against declawing as a prophylactic. The Centers for Disease Control, National Institute of Health, U.S. Public Health Service and Infectious Diseases Society of America have gone on record in agreement.

Declawing has been established in the United States as an alleged remedy of last resort for a variety of issues. Apart from the aforementioned and so-called health concerns, there are supposedly medical and behavioral justifications. But when we subject them to appropriate scrutiny, it becomes obvious that declawing is a remedy that can create as many, if not more, of the same kinds of problems as it purportedly solves. And, along with devocalization, it is an attack on the inherent nature of cats that is institutionalized as potentially a remedy of first resort by HB 3494-A.

Last, but not least, is the empty nature of the argument that declawing keeps cats from being surrendered to shelters. If that were true, no declawed cats would end up in our over-crowded shelters to be euthanized or, if they’re extremely fortunate, adopted to a more compassionate new home. But millions of such cats do end up in shelters, often because of the unintended behavioral and medical consequences of the procedure that are every bit as undesirable to the cats’ owners.

As counterproductive as I believe HB 3494-A in its current form would be (including the possibility that it could be used as a back-door inspiration for those who wish to pre-empt legitimate laws such as the one I authored), I believe that the original HB 3494 was an earnest attempt to discourage unnecessary declawing. Its prohibition on landlords requiring declawing of cats as a prerequisite for allowing them to live in rental units would have been a constructive step for Oregon.

Now that the bill has evolved toward a different purpose I urge you to consider a version of it that would resemble the attached draft amended version offered by the Paw Project, a veterinarian-led organization that successfully engineered the adoption of anti-declawing laws in a number of California cities several years ago. This amended version protects cats (and other specified animals) in a way that the current HB 3494-A never will.

Again, please reject HB 3494-A in its current form and amend it so that it accomplishes a meaningful regulation of declawing and devocalization for the people and animals of Oregon.

Very truly yours,



Paul Koretz

Councilmember, 5th District

Encl.

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May 19, 2015

Honorable Jeff Kruse
Senator, 1st District
State Capitol
900 Court Street NE, S-315
Salem, OR 97301

RE: HB 3494-A

Dear Senator Kruse:

I am writing to urge you to oppose HB 3494-A as currently written and to amend it to make it a meaningful prohibition on inherently inhumane procedures on cats and other animals.

While this bill purports to be a ban on the devocalization and declawing of cats, it actually is no prohibition at all. Instead, it is a complete abdication to veterinarians who would be able to unilaterally and arbitrarily decide when a situation warrants lifting the ban. This would explicitly begin with when the animal's owner essentially insists on getting the procedure done as an alternative to surrendering it to an animal shelter. That really is not a prohibition.

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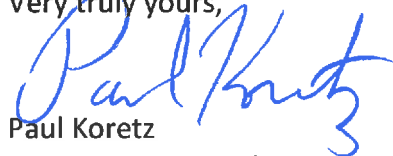
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Again, please reject HB 3494-A in its current form and amend it so that it accomplishes a meaningful regulation of declawing and devocalization for the people and animals of Oregon.

Very truly yours,



Paul Koretz

Councilmember, 5th District

Encl.