

May 18, 2015

Senate Human Services and Early Childhood Committee  
900 Court St, NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Members of the Senate Human Services and Early Childhood Committee:

On behalf of Alley Cat Allies and our supporters in Oregon, I am writing to urge you to **oppose HB 3494 unless amended** to remove the exemptions for behavior modification. While the bill purports to reduce declawing and devocalization, these exemptions create loopholes that actually legitimize these inhumane, unnecessary surgeries.

Alley Cat Allies is the only national advocacy organization dedicated to the protection and humane treatment of cats. We have promoted the neutering of community cats since our founding in 1990, and we regularly advise individuals, nonprofit groups, local governments, and state policymakers on humane approaches to cats. We support positive policies for cats in communities all over America, and we work towards reducing cat euthanasia in shelters to zero.

Effective declawing laws would prohibit the declawing of cats except in rare cases of medical necessity such as when the cat has a tumor in the bone. The declawing of cats is a cruel and unnecessary practice that can cause physical and psychological harm. Declawing describes a painful process involving the amputation of the last bone in each toe of a cat to prevent them from scratching and destroying objects. There are much simpler, more humane solutions to the problems that these procedures attempt to address - such as installing scratching posts or behavioral training. While toe removal (phalangectomy) might be medically appropriate in very rare circumstances such as a tumor in the bone (and would be listed as an exception under the law), such procedures are inhumane when performed for aesthetic or convenience reasons.

Furthermore, despite claims to the contrary, declawing cats does not increase the likelihood that the cat will remain in his home. Quite the opposite, declawed cats are less likely to use their litter box and are more likely to bite. These behaviors can lead more owners to relinquish their cats to animal shelters. Quite simply, declawing is not in the best interest of cats or cat owners.

We urge you to oppose HB 3494 unless amended to remove these exemptions on behalf of our supporters, your constituents, and Oregon's companion animals.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Holtz  
Staff Attorney