

Senate Committee on Human Services & Early Childhood
Committee Assistant, Maria Hernandez

Public Hearing Testimony on HB 3494-A OPPOSE UNLESS AMENDED

Dear Senator Gelser and Ms. Hernandez -

I have called Senator Gelser and asked that HB 3494-A is not brought to committee unless amended to remove all non-therapeutic options. I would like you to accept this letter as my testimony as I have to work on the public hearing meeting date of May 26th.

Declawing or devocalizing animals for human convenience is a painful, unnatural mutilation. A declawed cat cannot climb a cat tree or scratch an itch - which are both natural anxiety releasing behaviors. If abandoned or lost outdoors, they are without defense and unable to feed themselves. Dogs are social animals and, if debarked, they lose their natural ability to communicate.

In 28 countries and multiple U.S. cities, declawing is recognized as an illegal act of animal cruelty. There is no evidence to support that the animal remains free of pain thereafter (inclusive of laser surgery). In 2013, the American Veterinary Medical Association committee members unanimously "condemned" the same declawing procedure being performed on wild or exotic cats of any size due to **adverse health effects**. U.S. veterinarians spearheaded banning declawing in those cities where it is now illegal.

In addition, the surgery causes problems that cause people to relinquish cats: Research suggests that after declawing, up to 15% of cats will develop litter box aversion/house soiling, a feline response to anxiety and/or pain in their paws. Research has also shown that up to 18% of cats either start biting or bite more forcefully after their primary defense (claws) have been taken from them. Studies suggest that as many as 2.1 million cats in the U.S. develop litter box aversion after declawing, and as many as 2.8 million may have increased biting. **Anxiety and pain are the major causes of these behavioral abnormalities in cats.**

A therapeutic need for amputation of a toenail or toe is possible. For example, my cat got cryptococcus neoformans when digging near an uprooted tree. Because I pay very close attention to his well being, the infection was identified within 48 hours and successfully removed by amputating one toe to the first joint (along with an inexpensive medication for one month).

Medical practitioners should all take an oath to DO NO HARM to their charges. HB-3494-A isn't specific enough to close all loopholes and permanently ban declawing and devocalizing. There is no reason to declaw or devocalize that protects human health. Further, HB-3494-A could undermine legislation in New York and California.

Oregon is often viewed as one of the more progressive states. HB-3494-A is a big mistake in that regard. Good examples of carefully crafted laws can be found here: <http://www1.pawproject.org/legislation/>

HB-3494-A needs to be amended PLEASE!!!

kind regards -

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