



May 25, 2015

Regarding: Oregon HB 3494-A

To all concerned,

As a staunch advocate of cats keeping their claws for all but medical reasons for the individual cat, I am concerned about the bill under scrutiny: HB 3494-A. Legally sanctifying onychectomy/amputation of cat digits "as a last resort" will give veterinarians the legal justification to continue this inhumane practice.

The belief that not performing the procedure puts cats at risk of being euthanized or surrendered (+/- euthanized) is a culturally supported myth. In the rest of the world, people live comfortably with intact-pawed cats. Landlords do not evict them, because that would be absurd. People with compromised immune systems are not at greater health risk because that is a medically incorrect belief. Indeed, the Center for Disease Control, NIH, and the U.S. Public Health Services and Infectious Diseases Society of America have position papers stating that this procedure is neither needed, nor recommended. The key to preventing infection with Cat Scratch Disease is regular, routine flea control. There is a greater risk for humans living with declawed cats to be bitten and thereby hurt or develop *bacterial* infection, if the cat is unable to use their primary defense mechanism.

I am very proud to be a veterinarian: I can say with confidence that veterinarians, trained in medical and surgical care, are sadly also taught to follow the wishes of their patients' owners. Very few refuse what their client/customer requests, regardless of reluctance or guilt.

Whether cats suffer long-term from the effects of having every "finger" (and sometimes, "toes") amputated, is not the point in a moral society. There are undoubtedly many, many cats who do, and similarly, some who do not. The method used to perform the procedure and the analgesic protocol used, does not make it less reprehensible or more acceptable.

Oregon has been the leader in many aspects of social reform. This bill opens loopholes, rather than bringing an end to this practice. I encourage you to not pass this bill as it will be detrimental to cats in this state and will be used as an example in other places in the United States.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Margie Scherk", written over a horizontal line.

Margie Scherk
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Editor Journal Feline Medicine and Surgery
Check out: www.cathealthy.ca
www.PawProject.org. Who gives us the right? Don't declaw.

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The smallest feline is a masterpiece.
Leonardo da Vinci