

From: Nick Wiley [<mailto:nick@eagleeyemedia.net>]
Sent: Saturday, May 23, 2015 8:12 AM
To: Ross Cheyenne
Subject: HB 3494- Testimony to Share

Dear Cheyenne Ross,

Please include this testimony in the upcoming public hearing for HB 3494 in Salem on 5/26/15.

Dear Senator Alan Olsen,

I am unable to attend the public hearing for HB 3494 on May 26th, 2015, as I am working. I am writing to you since you are on the SHSEC committee regarding HB 3494.

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

Three very objectionable provisions/"certain conditions" 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 **Center for Disease Control**, the **National Institute of Health**, the **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 much more dangerous and prone to infection, 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.

This bill is not a "ban" on declawing, but an avenue that 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 trying to educate vets and the public.

The harmful repercussions of HB 3494 could be irreparable!

Please do not support this bill- the goal can be achieved without permanently damaging our pets and causing life-long suffering.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Nick & Kelly Wiley

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Wishing you all the best,
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