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ATTN: Maria Hernandez

Hello,

I am writing you because I oppose HB3494A, as it currently stands it is a poor law and will only allow unnecessary crimes against animals to continue. While I am not an Oregonian, I do live just across the Columbia River and have great hope that my own home state, Washington, may someday follow Oregon's lead, should they make the right choice and ban declawing and devocalization. For the past 4 years I have volunteered +8 hours a week at a local non-profit, no-kill rescue, it is here that I have witnessed firsthand the lifelong detrimental effects of declawing a cat. Rocky is a 4 year old Persian cat who was surrendered to our care because he had begun biting his elderly owner. The elderly woman's family had him declawed in hope of protecting her from scratches, unaware that declawed cats will turn to biting as self-defense and bites can be much worse than a scratch. They were confused how the sweet cat they knew before could make such a change in his behavior. Rocky stayed with us for almost a year before finding a new home. During his time with us we saw that his feet caused him a lot of pain, preventing him from climbing and jumping around and enjoying play like the other cats. They were so sensitive to touch that should anyone have attempted to touch them he would try to bite. Not only were his feet suffering but we noticed his back being sensitive to touch as well. We believe this is due to the fact that when a declaw surgery is performed it sometime effects tendons as well potentially preventing the cat from being able to stretch like normal. The poor young cat, who should have been running around, being playful and enjoying human touch and company, was obviously suffering, but we did our best to keep him comfortable and provide joint health supplements to help the pain. Unfortunately Rocky's second home did not work out either, despite his adoptive families' best effort to accommodate him and being fully aware of the situation, they chose to give him back because of the biting problem. Once again Rocky was back at the shelter, the place where so many claim a cat being declawed may be saved from by the procedure. Rocky is on a home trial with another family now, but we will not know for sure the results. Regardless of what happens, Rocky will always have a place at the shelter where he will be loved and cared for despite his disability as will all cats who may be harmed by a humans lack of knowledge, their selfishness about material belongings or the greed of veterinary practitioners. Rocky's story is just one of thousands, and there are many who suffer much worse than him. I hope the people of Oregon are able to open their minds to the facts that are presented over and over again that these surgeries are inhumane no matter who performs them and with what tools. It's time to be a voice for the voiceless and make history. Please amend this law to ban all declaw and devocalization surgeries for any reason other than an anatomical problem with a direct threat to the animals health. "You may choose to look away, but you may never again say that you did not know."

Thank you for your time and your consideration.

Sincerely,
Tess Ewart.