



June 1, 2015

To: Committee Assistant, Maria Hernandez

Re: HB 3494-A OPPOSE UNLESS AMENDED - Senate Committee on Human Services & Early Childhood

Dear Ms. Hernandez:

I am writing to say that HB 3494-A contains unacceptable loopholes and will not protect dogs and cats. The bill would allow declawing and devocalization to continue unchecked in Oregon at the sole discretion of veterinarians. The bill is not a step forward for animals. Rather, it is a step backwards in the movement to protect animals from unnecessary harm. Without a full ban on declawing and devocalization in Oregon, animals will continue to be subject to these cruel and inhumane practices for reasons that are unacceptable.

As a professionally-certified cat behaviorist who works with clients in Oregon, I have observed first-hand the detrimental and long-term negative effects of declawing in cats. These include (but are not limited to):

- **An increased likelihood of habitual biting**, which are much more prone to infections than scratches, and are of more serious medical concern to people with compromised immune systems;
- **Long-term physical pain and anxiety**, including arthritis chronic pain with movement, as well as behavioral problems such as aggression and excessive fearfulness; and
- **Litterbox avoidance issues**, which result when cats who have been declawed experience pain when entering the box and substrate irritates paws. In fact, litterbox avoidance is the number one reason why cats are relinquished to shelters or abandoned, and this bill would do absolutely NOTHING to prevent this from happening.

HB 3494-A allows exceptions that are giant loopholes and that would not stop vets from finding ways to declaw and devocalize as usual. It would codify the status quo. This bill, if used as model legislation, could invalidate the anti-declaw laws in place in California and set back the efforts to effect real change to end declawing 20 years. On June 2, 2015, Please withdraw HB 3494-A because it's unenforceable and worse, legitimizes devocalization and declawing—acts of cruelty—as acceptable practices under the law.

Sincerely,

Marci L. Koski, PhD and Certified Feline Behavior Specialist
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