

# The Paw Project

Advocates for Animals • A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

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June 1, 2015

Honorable Sara Gelser, Chair  
Senate Committee on Human Services & Early Childhood

RE: HB 3494-A OPPOSE  
Meeting date: June 2

Dear Senator Gelser,

I am deeply concerned that the bill, HB 3494-A, does nothing to prevent animals from being declawed or devocalized. The exemptions are the exceptions that swallow the rule.

The first exemption, presumably made in an effort to protect cats from losing their homes, does not reflect an accurate picture of what those in rescue-and-adoption find. We believe that declawing actually is the cause of cats losing their homes because of behavioral problems caused by declawing.

A recent Petfinder.com search for Salem, Oregon and surrounding areas shows there were 181 cats listed who have lost their homes and are in search of new ones. This does not include pounds and feral cat colonies. If declawing saved lives, the number of declawed cats looking for homes should be near zero, not 181. Declawed cats lose their homes because they begin to bite more after losing their claws and because they stop using their litter boxes.

The second exemption allows for declawing of the cats of the immunocompromised. Why would the Oregon Legislature ignore the established human health authorities like the Centers for Disease Control and the National Institutes of Health on zoonotic disease prevention? These organizations clearly state that declawing these cats is not advised. Responsibility for declawed cats biting immunocompromised individuals is something to be considered.

Lastly, I'd like to address the idea of the human-animal bond. I have always seen this as a reciprocal feeling of unconditional love. I have never considered this as the right for humans to mutilate their animals so they could protect their antiques.

I understand from proponents of this law that their ultimate goal is to ban these procedures outright. There is a danger is that other states' VMAs might copy this bill and codify these surgeries in other states. I don't think that this law even comes close to banning declawing or devocalizations or is even a stepping stone in that direction. I believe that the OVMA will always be against an outright ban, now and in two years or even 15 years. It is now up to you to decide what is right. I hope you will see that declawing and devocalization are cruel and unnecessary and never serve the best interests of the animals. Please don't compromise their lives away.

Sincerely yours,



Jennifer Conrad, DVM