



6/2/2015

Chair Gelsler and members of the Committee:

My name is Amy Sacks and I am representing The Pixie Project, a nonprofit animal rescue and veterinary clinic.

The Pixie Project opposes House Bill 3494 in its current form. However, The Pixie Project would support the bill with adoption of the A5 amendments. Devocalizing and declawing of animals are inhumane procedures that deprive the animals of a basic part of their identities and may lead to other physical and behavioral problems. We believe they should be used only out of medical necessity for the animal.

The exceptions in the A-Engrossed version of the bill are too broad. The bill would allow devocalization upon a showing only that "behavioral modification to correct excessive vocalization has failed" and would allow declawing upon a showing only that "[a]ttempts to prevent the animal from destructively using its claws have failed." These terms are undefined and could mean something as minimal as telling the animal a few times to stop barking or stop scratching.

The bill in its current form amounts to an implied statement that devocalizing and declawing are acceptable ways to keep a dog from barking or to keep a cat from scratching the furniture, which is a statement we do not think the Oregon Legislature should make.

As the director of an animal rescue and veterinary clinic, I see firsthand the negative effects of declawing. Declawed cats are more prone to behavioral problems, making it more likely that they are surrendered to shelters by their owners. These problems also make them more difficult to adopt. These animals are also at risk of medical complications from the surgery, which can be an expensive burden for shelters.

The A5 amendments would make the bill a good bill by allowing devocalization and declawing only when medically necessary for the animal. We therefore urge you to adopt the A5 amendments and pass the bill in that form.

Sincerely,

Amy Sacks  
Executive Director  
The Pixie Project