

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

HB231

Bill as Introduced

HB 231-FN - AS INTRODUCED

2023 SESSION

23-0384
08/05

HOUSE BILL

231-FN

AN ACT

prohibiting the removal of claws from cats.

SPONSORS:

Rep. Bordes, Belk. 5; Rep. Read, Rock. 10

COMMITTEE:

Environment and Agriculture

ANALYSIS

This bill creates a criminal penalty for declawing a cat.

Explanation:

Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.

Matter removed from current law appears ~~[in brackets and struck through.]~~

Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty Three

AN ACT prohibiting the removal of claws from cats.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 1 New Section; Removal of Claws from Cats. Amend RSA 644 by inserting after section 8-g the
2 following new section:

3 644:8-h Removal of Claws from Cats Prohibited.

4 I. No person shall remove the claws of a cat by performing an onychectomy, partial or
5 complete phalangectomy, or a tendonectomy, by any means, on a cat except when necessary in order
6 to address the physical medical condition of the cat, such as an existing or recurring illness,
7 infection, disease, injury, or abnormal condition in the claw that compromises the cat's health. No
8 person shall remove the claws of a cat for cosmetic or aesthetic reasons or for reasons of convenience
9 in keeping or handling the cat.

10 II. Any person who violates this section shall be guilty of a violation and subject to a civil
11 penalty of \$500 for the first violation, \$1,000 for the second violation, and \$2,500 for any subsequent
12 violation.

13 2 Effective Date. This act shall take effect January 1, 2024.

**HB 231-FN- FISCAL NOTE
AS INTRODUCED**

AN ACT prohibiting the removal of claws from cats.

FISCAL IMPACT: State County Local None

STATE:	Estimated Increase / (Decrease)			
	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026
Appropriation	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Revenue	\$0	Indeterminable Increase	Indeterminable Increase	Indeterminable Increase
Expenditures	\$0	Indeterminable Increase	Indeterminable Increase	Indeterminable Increase
Funding Source:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> General	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Highway	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

METHODOLOGY:

This bill establishes a violation level offense that may result in civil actions and penalties for declawing a cat. There is no method to determine how many charges, if any, would be brought as a result of this bill to determine the fiscal impact on expenditures. The Judicial Branch has indicated the potential cost per case for violation level offenses would be \$122 in FY 2024 (not including appeals).

AGENCIES CONTACTED:

Judicial Branch

Committee Minutes

SENATE CALENDAR NOTICE

Energy and Natural Resources

Sen Kevin Avard, Chair
Sen Howard Pearl, Vice Chair
Sen Regina Birdsell, Member
Sen David Watters, Member
Sen Debra Altschiller, Member

Date: March 22, 2023

HEARINGS

Tuesday		03/28/2023
(Day)		(Date)
Energy and Natural Resources	State House 103	9:00 a.m.
(Name of Committee)	(Place)	(Time)
9:00 a.m.	HB 233-FN	relative to useful thermal energy under the renewable portfolio standards.
9:15 a.m.	HB 247-FN	relative to protective well radii.
9:30 a.m.	HB 231-FN	prohibiting the removal of claws from cats.
9:45 a.m.	HB 119-FN	relative to homestead food operation licensure.

EXECUTIVE SESSION MAY FOLLOW

Sponsors:

HB 233-FN

Rep. Vose

Rep. McGhee

HB 247-FN

Rep. McConkey

HB 231-FN

Rep. Bordes

HB 119-FN

Rep. Ankarberg

Rep. Jonathan Smith

Rep. Cambrils

Sen. Gannon

Rep. Jonathan Smith

Rep. Read

Rep. Berezny

Rep. Plett

Sen. Lang

Rep. Avellani

Rep. Cushman

Rep. D. Thomas

Sen. Pearl

Rep. Coulon

Nikolas Liamos 271-7875

Kevin A. Avard
Chairman

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Nikolas Liamos 271-7875

HB 231-FN, prohibiting the removal of claws from cats.

Hearing Date: March 28, 2023

Time Opened: 9:40 a.m. **Time Closed:** 10:37 a.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Avard, Pearl, Birdsell, Watters and Altschiller

Members of the Committee Absent : None

Bill Analysis: This bill creates a criminal penalty for declawing a cat.

Sponsors:

Rep. Bordes

Rep. Read

Who supports the bill: In total, 123 individuals signed in support of HB 231-FN. The full sign in sheets are available upon request to the Legislative Aide, Nikolas Liamos (nikolas.liamos@leg.state.nh.us).

Who opposes the bill: In total, 20 individuals signed in opposition of HB 231-FN. The full sign in sheets are available upon request to the Legislative Aide, Nikolas Liamos (nikolas.liamos@leg.state.nh.us).

Who is neutral on the bill: In total, no individuals signed in as neutral of HB 231-FN. The full sign in sheets are available upon request to the Legislative Aide, Nikolas Liamos (nikolas.liamos@leg.state.nh.us).

Summary of testimony presented in support:

Representative Mike Bordes

Belknap County 5

- Representative Mike Bordes introduced House Bill 231-FN.
- Rep. Bordes stated that HB 231-FN eliminates the declawing of cats, except in medical emergencies.
- Rep. Bordes stated that declawing is an old, barbaric treatment for cats.
- Rep. Bordes stated that many people have their cat declawed because the cat may scratch their furniture.

- Rep. Bordes recounted his own experience of when his kittens tore apart his furniture, and that instead of declawing his kittens he bought less expensive furniture that he did not care if it got scratched up.
- Rep. Bordes stated that declawing a cat is the same as cutting off a human's finger at the first knuckle.
- Rep. Bordes stated that after being declawed, cats are unable to walk as they are intended to walk.
- Rep. Bordes posed an example of a house cat that had been declawed, if the declawed house cat gets outside, it will be unable to fight off any predators.
- Rep. Bordes stated that he has received a lot of constituent support for HB 231-FN.
 - Rep. Bordes also noted that HB 231-FN passed the House favorably.
- Rep. Bordes stated that HB 231-FN is a basic bill that shows that we care about the animals in our state.
- Senator Watters noted that RSA 644:8 is the animal cruelty statute.
- Senator Watters asked if by placing the provisions of HB 231-FN into RSA 644:8, is it fair to say the prime sponsor is stating that this practice qualifies as animal cruelty.
 - Rep. Bordes confirmed that this is his intent.
- Senator Pearl asked how many cats are declawed in a year in New Hampshire.
 - Rep. Bordes replied that we do not official numbers.
 - Rep. Bordes added that he has been asked that question a lot.
 - Rep. Bordes further added that many veterinarians will not perform the procedure, but there are still some who will.
 - Rep. Bordes stated that he wishes he could provide a factual figure, but the practice is still being done.
- Senator Pearl asked if it would be fair to say that the only time the practice is being performed is when it is medically necessary for either the cat or the owner.
 - Rep. Bordes replied that he disagrees.
- Senator Pearl asked if, since there is no data to prove that this practice is being abused to the procedure itself, in that the procedure is not being overused and only performed in certain situations.
 - Rep. Bordes replied that the majority of people who have their cat declawed have the procedure done because the cat is destroying furniture.
 - Rep. Bordes added that there are alternatives to declawing that should be used.
- Senator Pearl stated that it is his understanding that a veterinarian presents the alternatives to declawing to the cat owner before declawing is chosen.
 - Rep. Bordes replied that it should be, and he hopes the majority do offer alternatives.
 - Rep. Bordes added that he has been contacted by veterinarians who state that they hope HB 231-FN passes so they can turn around and tell their customers that declawing is against the law.
- Senator Avard asked what our neighboring states do in terms of similar legislation.
 - Rep. Bordes replied that currently the practice is illegal in Maryland, several countries, as well as several cities and municipalities.
- Rep. Bordes stated that there is misinformation that goes around surrounding the debate of declawing.

- Rep. Bordes explained that one piece of misinformation is that if someone cannot have their cat declawed then they will send the cat to a shelter or dump them on the streets.
 - Rep. Bordes refuted the misinformation claims by stating that areas who have passed similar legislation have not had increases in homeless cats or cats returned to shelters.
- Senator Altschiller asked if HB 231-FN takes off the table the mutualization of cats for somebody's aesthetic interests.
 - Rep. Bordes confirmed that that is the intent of HB 231-FN.
- Senator Altschiller asked if the only way declawing a cat would be on the table is if the cat had a serious infection or an injury to its paw.
 - Rep. Bordes confirmed that that is correct.
- Senator Altschiller asked if it is the prime sponsor's experience that because this procedure is looked down upon by the veterinarian community, is this procedure being driven underground.
 - Rep. Bordes replied that this procedure is not necessarily being driven underground, but there are still veterinarians who perform this practice.
- Senator Avard asked if a veterinarian has a choice of whether or not to perform the procedure.
 - Rep. Bordes replied that a veterinarian does have the choice to perform a procedure.
 - Rep. Bordes reiterated that declawing a cat is a barbaric ritual.
- Senator Avard asked if clipping a dog's tail or straightening a dog's tail is barbaric to.
 - Rep. Bordes replied that in his personal experience he does not alter his dogs.
 - Rep. Bordes added that it a personal choice for the owner of the dog.
- Senator Birdsell asked why veterinarians are not denying the customers who ask to have their cat declawed.
 - Rep. Bordes replied that an owner of a practice can dictate that the veterinarians who they employ must do the procedure.
 - Rep. Bordes added that it is a lot easier for the veterinarian to say the procedure is illegal, rather than get into a battle with the cat's owner or their own boss.

Dr. Sabrina Russet

Owner of Court St. Veterinary Hospital, Small Animal Veterinarian

- Doctor Sabrina Russet stated that she is a small animal veterinarian and owner of Court Street Veterinary Hospital in Keene, New Hampshire.
- Dr. Russet stated that with the advances in veterinarian medicine we now know that the implications to declawing cats are catastrophic.
 - Dr. Russet added that we now have data that shows this procedure has short and long term affects on cats who are declawed.
 - Dr. Russet noted the post operation side affects which include, uncontrolled acute pain, chronic maladaptive pain that can persist throughout the remainder of the cat's life, nerve trauma, infection, abscess formation, protrusion of the bone in the second phalanx. lameness in patients, and mal positioning and having to walk abnormally.

- Dr. Russet added that we can also see severe secondary behavioral problems which include litter box aversion.
- Dr. Russet stated that data from around the world shows that we are seeing massive paradigm shifts concerning declawing cats.
 - Dr. Russet explained that her colleagues in Britain, Europe, and several provinces in Canada, categorize declawing cats as animal cruelty.
 - Dr. Russet added that the people at the International Cat Care and their Veterinary Division, the Society of Feline Medicine, state that the declawing of cats other than for therapeutic reasons is unethical.
- Dr. Russet stated that she fears if HB 231-FN fails to pass, then it may further legitimize the rhetoric that this procedure is anything less than animal cruelty and abuse.
- Dr. Russet stated that New Hampshire has a unique opportunity with HB 231-FN to support veterinarians.
- Dr. Russet stated that it is her personal opinion that declining to legislate on these issues places the onus of maintaining animal welfare standards on the shoulders of veterinarians.
 - Dr. Russet added that without clear legislation on this issue, it insinuates to the public that this procedure and practice is negotiable.
- Dr. Russet stated that she sees a lot of cases where patients pressure veterinarians to perform these procedures.
 - Dr. Russet added that in worse cases, associate or young veterinarians find themselves in positions that require them to perform these procedures from their superiors.
 - Dr. Russet added that if an associate or young veterinarian declines to perform this procedure, then they run the risk of financial or experiential consequences.
- Dr. Russet stated veterinarians do not have the same legal teams that you see in human medicine.
 - Dr. Russet added that many veterinarians are small business owners and are subject to online reviews which could threaten their livelihood.
- Dr. Russet stated we have the opportunity to signal to current veterinarians that they are heard in their concerns and to younger veterinarians that New Hampshire stands on the forefront of animal welfare.
- Senator Avard asked if someone who moves from Massachusetts to New Hampshire, and they had their cat declawed in Massachusetts, would they be subject to the penalties in HB 231-FN.
 - Dr. Russet asked for clarification on Senator Avard's question.
 - Senator Avard clarified that he is asking about who would face the penalty for having this procedure done, the cat's owner who moved or the veterinarian who performed the procedure, and how New Hampshire would enforce these penalties.
 - Dr. Russet replied that to her knowledge of HB 231-FN, there would be a fine imposed on the veterinarian who performed the procedure after enforcement.
 - Dr. Russet added that there is no penalty for cat owners who had this procedure prior to the passage of HB 231-FN.

- Senator Watters stated that after Dr. Russet's testimony, it seems that what we know now about the harm this causes is not what we knew before.
- Senator Watters asked if what we know now, that being the harm declawing causes, does this reinforce that declawing should be categorized under animal abuse or cruelty.
 - Dr. Russet confirmed that she could classify this procedure as animal cruelty.

Michelle Fransen-Conroy

Private Citizen, Former Veterinarian Technician

- Michelle Fransen-Conroy stated that she used to work in a local Concord Animal Hospital in the early 90s as a veterinarian technician.
- Ms. Fransen-Conroy stated that she has seen firsthand the post-surgery effects on cats who have been declawed.
 - Ms. Fransen-Conroy explained how the cats would be flailing around in their cage when they come out of anesthesia trying to remove the bandages wrapped around their paws.
 - Ms. Fransen-Conroy further explained how the cages would be covered in blood due to the cats flailing, and the cats would have to have their paws rewrapped.
 - Ms. Fransen-Conroy added that she observed this behavior numerous times.
 - Ms. Fransen-Conroy further added that it was horrible to listen to the sounds the cats would make post-surgery.

Joan O'Brien

Private Citizen

- Joan O'Brien presented articles to the committee that further enforce previous testimony on the lingering pain cats feel after being declawed.
- Ms. O'Brien stated that declawing cats is a frowned upon procedure in the veterinarian world.
- Ms. O'Brien stated that this procedure is still done today.
- Ms. O'Brien stated that prior to the hearing, she visited a vet adoption site that listed three cats available in New Hampshire who had been declawed.
- Ms. O'Brien stated New Hampshire has a no-kill policy, which means that animals that are surrendered to a shelter are re-homed.
 - Ms. O'Brien stated this to reinforce her point that, instead of declawing a cat, one could put it up for adoption as an alternative.
- Ms. O'Brien stated that those who wish to have a declawed cat should adopt an already declawed cat instead of subjected another cat to this practice.

Kurt Ehrenberg

New Hampshire Director, Humane Society

- Kurt Ehrenberg stated that the Humane Society views declawing as a cruel treatment.
- Dir. Ehrenberg stated that there are 17 states and communities across the United States that have adopted a similar law to HB 231-FN.
 - Dir. Ehrenberg added that most of Canada and Europe have made declawing illegal.

- Dir. Ehrenberg stated that the American Association of Feline Practitioners supports HB 231-FN and is opposed to the declawing of cats.
- Dir. Ehrenberg explained that declawing a cat is the same for humans as removing the finger right at the bottom where the hand meets the finger.
- Dir. Ehrenberg stated that we have heard testimony that claimed that a veterinarian would only perform this procedure only if it is medically necessary.
- Dir. Ehrenberg stated that the practice of declawing increases the risk of humans and their health because cats are more likely to bite or become aggressive post procedure.
- Dir. Ehrenberg stated that when a cat increases in aggression, they are more likely to be surrendered to a shelter.
- Dir. Ehrenberg stated that declawing has been outlawed recently in New York state, and they have not seen an increase in cats being surrendered to shelters.
- Senator Avard asked for data to show that this is a common practice.
 - Dir. Ehrenberg stated that declawing is shameful.
 - Dir. Ehrenberg stated that he does not have the numbers and is not a statistician.
 - Dir. Ehrenberg noted that shelters do see declawed cats turn up frequently.
- Dir. Ehrenberg stated that declawing due to a medical necessity is not an issue if it is done responsibly, the issue that HB 231-FN addresses are those procedures that are done for cosmetic or aesthetic reasons.
 - Dir. Ehrenberg added that the issues are that there are fly-by-night veterinarians who perform this procedure and they do not come to testify either in the House or the Senate.
- Senator Watters asked if it would be fair to say, that while New Hampshire recognizes that pets are the property of their owners, that those property rights be abrogated if there is cruelty.
 - Dir. Ehrenberg confirmed that he believes so.
- Senator Watters stated that RSA 644:8 states that the docking of horse tails is abuse but that the docking of dog tails is not under this statute.
- Senator Watters asked then if there has been a determination that docking horse tails is abusive while the same procedure is not abusive to dogs.
 - Dir. Ehrenberg replied that he tends to agree with Senator Watters most of the time, but this time he does not know, and he would trust his judgement on that.
- Senator Watters asked if under New Hampshire's animal cruelty law that we prohibit disfigurement or mutilation and is it Dir. Ehrenberg's opinion that declawing without a medical need is mutilation.
 - Dir. Ehrenberg confirmed that he would agree.
- Senator Birdsell asked what would stop the veterinarians who perform the fly-by-night procedures if HB 231-FN is passed.
 - Dir. Ehrenberg replied that he has no idea.

Summary of testimony presented in opposition:

Doctor Jane Barlow Roy

New Hampshire Veterinary Medical Association

- Doctor Jane Barlow Roy stated that she is also the representative for New Hampshire to the house of delegates for the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA).
- Dr. Barlow Roy stated that the New Hampshire chapter of the AVMA has roughly 400 veterinarians who are members.
- Dr. Barlow Roy stated that the membership of the AVMA is divided on this topic.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy added that the AVMA has polled their membership for several years now on how they feel about declawing cats.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy noted that the results of the poll show about a 50/50 split in their membership, and that on both sides of the issue say the support or oppose the practice for a number of reasons.
- Dr. Barlow Roy stated a veterinarian is in the business of educating their clients.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy added that a veterinarian should let their customers know that there are alternatives to declawing their cat.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy listed the alternatives which included scratching posts and soft pads.
- Dr. Barlow Roy provided the committee with a letter of support for alternative options from the AVMA.
- Dr. Barlow Roy stated the AVMA at a state and national level have concerns that legislation and regulation will remove their members' ability to make judgements on medical care.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy added that legislation like HB 231-FN removes the option for medical care that they have worked hard to build, including the trust they build with their customers and patients.
- Dr. Barlow Roy stated that HB 231-FN, if passed, will disrupt the veterinary patient-client relationship, in that it will make certain decisions bring forth legal consequences.
- Dr. Barlow Roy stated that veterinarians have the discretion to elect to perform any procedure, whether it is declawing, spay and neuter, or even amputate a leg.
- Dr. Barlow Roy stated that a 2016 study conducted by the AVMA showed that around one procedure per month was performed in the entire country.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy added that in 2016, the AVMA had a membership of around ninety to one hundred thousand members.
- Dr. Barlow Roy concluded her testimony by stating that this subject is controversial but, the AVMA feels that HB 231-FN would severely hinder their ability to carry out appropriate medical care.
- Senator Pearl asked if declawing a cat is primarily performed for medical reasons.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy confirmed that it is.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy added that to the best of her knowledge the members of the AVMA do a good job educating clients on the alternatives to declawing.
- Senator Pearl asked if Dr. Barlow Roy felt that declawing was a more invasive procedure compared to spaying or neutering, and if the side effects from declawing differed to the side effects of other invasive procedures.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy replied that she did not think declawing was more invasive or had more severe side effects than spaying or neutering.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy added that any procedure performed runs the risk of an infection, or long-term pain.

- Dr. Barlow Roy listed the amputation of a limb due to cancer or the removal of an eye due to glaucoma to reinforce her point of similar procedures that potentially have long-term complications.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy reiterated that declawing is not a special case, every procedure is inherently painful and can have long-standing painful complications.
- Senator Pearl asked if it was Dr. Barlow Roy's opinion if declawing was outlawed, could it result in more cats being euthanized.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy replied that there always is the possibility of euthanasia.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy added that pets are euthanized for a variety of reasons and, there are times in a veterinarian's career where they do not necessarily agree with a pet's owner for euthanasia but, it is the owner's ultimate choice because pets are property.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy reiterated her earlier point that a veterinarian has a choice of whether to perform a procedure.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy further added that if a veterinarian works in a clinic or animal hospital that dictates that they perform procedures that contradict their own morals or beliefs, they always have a choice to leave their current place of work.
- Senator Birdsell asked if the NHAVMA could come out on their own with rules regarding declawing.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy replied that the NHAVMA is separate from the board of veterinary medicine.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy added that currently the board of veterinary medicine is in the process of rewriting their rules, but to the best of her knowledge the board is not considering declawing as one of their rules.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy noted that the AVMA follows the board of veterinary medicine's code of ethics which can be found on the AVMA's website.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy explained that the NHAVMA does not create any official rule making process, and they do not have their own position statements, they default to the AVMA's position statements.
- Senator Birdsell asked if the board of veterinary medicine could put forth rules concerning declawing.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy replied that it is something the board could put forth.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy reiterated that the AVMA is a separate entity from the board of veterinary medicine.
- Senator Watters noted that on Lines 6 and 7 of HB 231-FN, it states that this procedure can take place to address illnesses including infection, disease, injury or abnormal condition that comprises the cat's health.
- Senator Watters asked Dr. Barlow Roy if HB 231-FN was clear in its distinction between a medical condition and cosmetic aesthetic.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy replied that with all due respect, she questions who will be making the decision if it is a medical condition or not.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy asked if someone would go to a veterinarian or subpoena their medical records or talk to the pet owner to see if the procedure was carried out due to a medical condition.

- Dr. Barlow Roy added that she finds having the medical condition exception helpful, but that it comes down to who will be making the decision to declaw a cat, because it is between the owner and the veterinarian.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy further added that it would have to be someone outside of the veterinarian and pet owner relationship who raises an issue with the declawing.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy continued to add that subpoenaing a human medical record would be a HIPPA violation, and if she was subpoenaed for a pet's medical record, she would ask why someone needs that information.
- Senator Watters asked Dr. Barlow Roy if she did not believe the terminology "recurring illness, disease, injury, or abnormal condition in the claw that compromises the cat's health" is clear to a veterinarian.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy replied that she goes back to her previous point of who is making the decision, if a veterinarian makes the decision with the owner than it is a clear decision, someone outside of the relationship would have to question the decision and use the court process to explore the decision.
- Senator Watters stated that it would be the Attorney General's Office who would get involved.
- Senator Watters asked Dr. Barlow Roy if surgeries for the removal of an eye or limb due to an illness differ from declawing because, the procedure is a choice for cosmetic or aesthetic reasons or even convenience for the pet owner.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy replied that any surgery where you are altering a pet has a risk.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy noted that they try to mitigate the risk of infection by using anesthesia and subsequent pain medication, and antibiotics to treat infections.
- Senator Watters stated that the cause of the pain is something that's distinctive.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy stated that we have an entire human medical industry that is focused on cosmetic surgery which have their own inherent risks.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy added that the inherent risk of human cosmetic surgery is no different to her than doing a surgical procedure for a true medical reason.
- Senator Watters asked if the cat has made the decision to have cosmetic surgery.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy replied that it is just as much as somebody has the decision of whether or not someone has the decision to get a nose job, it is the same type of cosmetic surgery.
- Senator Watters asked if Dr. Barlow Roy is implying that the cat made the choice to get the surgery.
- Senator Watters explained that a journal article published in the Journal of Beyond Medicine that outlines a study about significantly increasing in the various kinds of pains and conditions.
- Senator Watters asked Dr. Barlow Roy how she responds to the conclusion that proposes persistent back pain and discomfort due to declawing surgeries and the development of behavioral changes such as biting, aggression, and inappropriate elimination.
 - Senator Watters added that after reading this article wouldn't it make sense to see declawing as animal cruelty.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy replied that declawing does not rise to the level of animal cruelty.
- Senator Watters stated that the committee is the one who decides if it is animal cruelty.

- Senator Pearl asked if spaying a female cat is an elective procedure.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy confirmed that it is.
- Senator Pearl stated that in statute a pet is an owner's property, and an owner is charged with making the medical decisions and some could be viewed as cosmetic.
- Senator Pearl asked Dr. Barlow Roy if she would agree that there is one part left out of HB 231-FN, and that is the medical necessity of this surgery for the owner of animal.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy replied that she cannot speak to the human medical aspects as she is a veterinarian and not a human doctor, but it is something that does come up in discussions.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy added that in talking to some owners who have declining medical health, they are concerned about being scratched or bit by their pets.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy further added that she can not comment if this should be in statute or not.
- Senator Pearl asked if it is Dr. Barlow Roy's belief that any elective surgery or any type of medical procedure on an animal is best left between the owner of the animal and the veterinarian, and not left to the legislature.
 - Dr. Barlow Roy confirmed that that is her belief.

Angela Ferrari

Dog Owners of the Granite State

- Angela Ferrari stated that her membership includes a number of cat owners and breeders.
- Ms. Ferrari stated that her organization feels that legislation intended to limit the professional judgment of veterinarians is inappropriate.
 - Ms. Ferrari added that lawmakers should not attempt to substitute their views on husbandry issues and veterinary medicine in general for those of a licensed professional trained in veterinary medicine.
- Ms. Ferrari stated that a lot of questions came up about the numbers of declaws that are happening.
 - Ms. Ferrari noted that we do not know the statistics.
- Ms. Ferrari stated that another comment that is made is that declawing is primarily performed for cosmetic reasons or convenience.
- Ms. Ferrari posed the question, that if we do not know the data or statistics than how do we know the reason for the procedure.
- Ms. Ferrari stated that animals do fall under property rights, so what procedures are done and why should be left up to the animal owner and the veterinarian.
- Ms. Ferrari stated that cat owners who are elderly and on blood thinners can face serious medical issues if they are scratched by their cat.
 - Ms. Ferrari added that declawing a cat would allow for a loving owner to be able to keep their cat.
- Ms. Ferrari reiterated the NHAVMA's testimony by stating that declawing is a rare procedure and many veterinarians do not offer this procedure.
 - Ms. Ferrari reiterated another point by stating that it is a clinic or veterinarians' choice of whether to perform this procedure or not.
- Ms. Ferrari stated that many years ago it was common to have your cat declawed when they are spayed or neutered.

- Ms. Ferrari added that as time has gone on, the practice has become less popular and is not performed unless it is medically necessary.
- Ms. Ferrari stated that an owner should be educated on what the full procedure fully entails and the alternatives to this procedure.
- Ms. Ferrari stated that there are concerns on who would attempt to get the information on why and how the cat was declawed.
- Ms. Ferrari stated that the NHAVMA discourages the declawing of cats.
- Ms. Ferrari stated that it is rare in college for veterinarian students to learn the declawing procedure, so the new wave of professionals would not have the training to carry out this procedure.
- Ms. Ferrari stated that a survey conducted by the AVMA of 273 cat owners who had their pet declawed, only one percent or three owners reported that their cats exhibited negative behavioral changes following the procedure.
- Ms. Ferrari stated that any surgery has risks.
- Ms. Ferrari stated that in 2022, New York and Maryland passed legislation similar to HB 231-FN.
- Ms. Ferrari stated that Arizona, Florida and Virginia all have killed legislation similar to HB 231-FN.

Neutral Information Presented: None

NPL

Date Hearing Report completed: April 3, 2023

Speakers

Senate Remote Testify

Energy and Natural Resources Committee Testify List for Bill HB231 on 2023-01-01

Support: 117 Oppose: 18

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Position</u>
Jensvold, James	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Conrad DVM, Jennifer	A Member of the Public	Paw Project, a veterinarian-run animal advocacy nonprofit	Support
Apling, Chris	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
MCCLINTICK, DONNA	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Martell-Moran, Nicole	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Hickman, Lorelei	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Collier, Diana	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Moran, Nicole	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Weiss, Tracy	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Heath, Crystal	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Dructor, Chris	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Whynott, Dorinne	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Merrigan, Susan	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Cote, David	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Lederer, Gale	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Daum, Amanda	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Yurenka, Katrina	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Jaroch, Noelle	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Bozanson, Sherry	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Moore, Trois	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
McEwan, Lynne	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Hamrick, Lindsay	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Booth, Anne	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Jensen, Wendy	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Thompson, Susan	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Hurley, Margaret	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Griffin, Laurie	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Caplan, Elise	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Wahl, BJ	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
ONeill, Elisa	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Ede, John	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Lange-Demers, Sandra	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Monty, Susan	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Kingsbury, Lacie	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Dionne, Linda	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Monty, Tara	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Desmarais, Doreen	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Lajoie, Carin	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Haddad, Nuha	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Vogt, Eleanor	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Smith, Ginny	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Marino, Elizabeth	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
ate, William	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Doyle, Kathryn	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Quilici, Michael	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Gray, Mary	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Trently, William	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support

Kosmatka, Marylou	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Richardson, Dianc	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose
Ball, Darlene	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Yeaton, Elinor	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Munroc, Pamela	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppc
Nickerson, Lana	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppc
Rauter, Linda	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Trently, Bertha	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Geraci, Kim	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Butterworth, Linda	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose
Taylor, Lisa	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Dewey, Karen	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose
Labrie, Valerie	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Raines, Jodi	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
lewis, holly	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose
Fleming, Brian	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Blessing, Shelley	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
ONeill, Steve	A Member of the Public	myself	Support
ONeill, Mary-Ann	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Roy, Kathleen	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Herlithy, Nina	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Thomas, Brenda	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Freilich, Pam	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Labrie, Laureen	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Fransen-Conroy, Michelle	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Williams, Cindy	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose
Thibeault, Brian	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Fournier, Suzanne	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
nolin, sharon	A Member of the Public	Myself	Supp
Slepian, Jean	A Member of the Public	Myself	Supp...
Gauthier, Diana	A Member of the Public	Myself Diana Gauthier	Oppose
Thibodeau, Lucille	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Gerber, Calley	A Member of the Public	Alley Cat Allies	Support
Haggerty, Benjamin	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Keane, Stephanie	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Loosigian, Julie	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Muccioli, Denise	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Dewey, Seth	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Turner, Elizabeth	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Johnson, Ingrid	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
EVERETT, THERESA	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Frayse, Michael	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Campbell, Karen	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Haggerty, Felisha	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Haggerty, Trevor	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Azzaro, Melissa	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Macomber, Ruth	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Krawczyk, Martha	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Monagle, Beverly	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Davis, Kathryn	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Sweeney-Blaise, Robyn	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Sweeney, Sean	A Member of the Public	Myself	Suppo
Blaise, Everett	A Member of the Public	Myself	Suppo
Blaise, Carmen	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Peirce, Kathy	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
SAWTELLE, ERICK	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose

Hils, Sarah	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Partridge, S.	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Ferrari, Angela	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose
HALL, EDWARD	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose
gart, Caroline	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Masi, Gail K	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose
Kouyoumjian, Kim	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Dunlavey, Paula	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Doyle, Jeanne	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Flis, Carole	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Lerchenfeldt, Mari	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Perry, Debra	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Perry, Christian	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Charest, Jeanne	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose
Branson, Alan	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Hantz, Andrea	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose
Hilbert, Laura	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Campbell, Kay	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Denault, DVM, Susan	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose
Kanc, Amanda	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Zalewski, Laurie	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose
Champney, Kate	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose
Grochala, Dustin	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Stickney, Lacey	A Member of the Public	Myself	Oppose
Zerba, Alex	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Canclas, Dianc	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Altschiller, Senator Debra	An Elected Official	Myself	Support
Grochala, Tone	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
urry, Mary Lou	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Dotson, Sarah	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
Castillo, Daniela	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support
McDowell, Susan	A Member of the Public	Myself	Support

Testimony

Nikolas Liamos

From: lorelei hickman <lovecattt@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 23, 2023 2:46 AM
To: Regina Birdsell; Howard Pearl; Kevin Avard; Nikolas Liamos; David Watters; Debra Altschiller
Subject: In Support of HB 231

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Dear Committee Members:

As a former veterinary nurse who was fired from my job in 2010 for attempting to educate pet owners about the harmful effects of declawing cats, I wish to express my **STRONG SUPPORT** for HB231, which would ban declawing in the state of New Hampshire. Simply put, there is no place for this outdated and inhumane procedure in modern veterinary medicine, and veterinarians who claim otherwise are protecting their profits, **NOT** animal welfare or their clients' best financial interests. The veterinary industry is essentially self-regulated, with the veterinarians who sit on the state licensing boards being the only arbiters of what is acceptable for veterinarians to do, and this is a problem for consumers of veterinary services as well as the animals in their care. **PLEASE SUPPORT HB 231 AND HELP NEW HAMPSHIRE JOIN THE MAJORITY OF THE CIVILIZED WORLD IN RECOGNIZING DECLAWING FOR THE ANIMAL CRUELTY THAT IT IS.**

Thank you!

Lorelei Hickman
Former veterinary nurse
504-264-7087

Dr. Nicole Martell-Moran

1600 B Clear Lake City Blvd.
Houston, Texas 77062
281-480-5500 281-480-0604 fax
www.felinemedcenter.com



In Support of Bill HB 231

3/23/23

Dear Rep. Bordes:

I am writing in support of HB 231 to ban declawing of cats and other animals in the state of New Hampshire. I am a feline specialist veterinarian with a special interest in the after-effects of declawing on cats. I have spent 10 years collecting data on behavioral changes and pain assessment in these cats and am very concerned about the continuation of this surgery. I see chronic pain, akin to reported effects on human amputee patients and behavioral changes that put both the cat's and their owner's health at risk. Declawed cats exhibit increased biting behavior. This can be due to chronic pain and/or the absence of scratching as a first defense. Cat bites are known to be at high risk for developing infection whereas scratches are not.

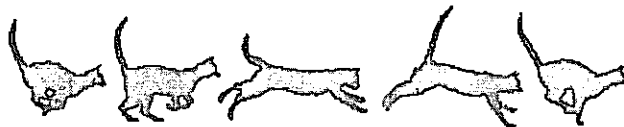
The completed study is attached and has been published in the Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery. The data show declawed cats have a 3 times higher odds for developing back pain, 7 times higher odds of inappropriate elimination habits, a 4.5 times higher odds of increased biting behavior and 3 times higher odds of barbering. Cats that had a piece of the bone left behind (63% of the cats in this study) at the time of the surgery had a 9 times higher odds of being aggressive. Several of these after-effects are common reasons for relinquishment to shelters. Cats can be trained and nails can be trimmed or capped. There is no medical need for this surgery and it is my sincere hope that you will sign the bill to set the precedent for the rest of the veterinary community and ban declawing.

Sincerely,
Nicole Martell-Moran, DVM, MPH, DABVP(Feline)

Complete Document

Can Be Viewed

In Bill Folder



Pain and adverse behavior in declawed cats

Nicole K Martell-Moran¹, Mauricio Solano²
and Hugh GG Townsend³

Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery

2018, Vol. 20(4) 280–288

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Abstract

Objectives The aim of this study was to assess the impact of onychectomy (declawing) upon subsequent development of back pain and unwanted behavior in cohorts of treated and control cats housed in two different locations.

Methods This was a retrospective cohort study. In total, there was 137 declawed and 137 non-declawed cats, of which 176 were owned cats (88 declawed, 88 non-declawed) and 98 were shelter cats (49 declawed and 49 non-declawed). All cats were physically examined for signs of pain and barbering. The previous 2 years of medical history were reviewed for documented unwanted behavior such as inappropriate elimination and biting with minimal provocation and aggression. All declawed cats were radiographed for distal limb abnormalities, including P3 (third phalanx) bone fragments. The associations of declaw surgery with the outcomes of interest were examined using χ^2 analysis, two sample *t*-tests and manual, backwards, stepwise logistic regression.

Results Significant increases in the odds of back pain (odds ratio [OR] 2.9), periuria/perichezia (OR 7.2), biting (OR 4.5) and barbering (OR 3.06) occurred in declawed compared with control cats. Of the 137 declawed cats, 86 (63%) showed radiographic evidence of residual P3 fragments. The odds of back pain (OR 2.66), periuria/perichezia (OR 2.52) and aggression (OR 8.9) were significantly increased in declawed cats with retained P3 fragments compared with those declawed cats without. Optimal surgical technique, with removal of P3 in its entirety, was associated with fewer adverse outcomes and lower odds of these outcomes, but operated animals remained at increased odds of biting (OR 3.0) and undesirable habits of elimination (OR 4.0) compared with non-surgical controls.

Conclusions and relevance Declawing cats increases the risk of unwanted behaviors and may increase risk for developing back pain. Evidence of inadequate surgical technique was common in the study population. Among declawed cats, retained P3 fragments further increased the risk of developing back pain and adverse behaviors. The use of optimal surgical technique does not eliminate the risk of adverse behavior subsequent to onychectomy.

Accepted: 23 March 2017

Introduction

The onychectomy procedure (declawing) is performed across the USA and Canada to eliminate the possibility of property destruction and scratches. Medical indications for the procedure include removal of nail bed neoplasms and paronychia. Some believe that declawing will stop the spread of zoonotic diseases to immunocompromised cat owners.^{1–3} To avoid disease transmission from scratches, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend flea prevention, keeping cats indoors, away from strays and avoiding rough play with cats. However, declawing is not a recommended part of their strategy.⁴ The documented increased biting behavior of declawed cats can lead to more severe disease in people than cat scratches.⁵ In one study of cat-inflicted wounds

presented to an emergency room, none of the cat scratches resulted in infection, whereas 20% of bite puncture wounds became infected, with several requiring

¹Feline Medical Center, Houston, TX, USA

²Cummings Veterinary Medical Center at Tufts University, North Grafton, MA, USA

³Department of Large Animal Clinical Sciences, Western College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada

Corresponding author:

Nicole Martell-Moran DVM, MPH, Feline Medical Center, Houston, TX, USA

Email: nkmartell@live.com

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Nikolas Lamos

From: Gale Lederer <galelederer@yahoo.com>
ent: Friday, March 24, 2023 10:58 AM
To: Kevin Avard; Howard Pearl; Regina Birdsell; Debra Altschiller; David Watters; Nikolas Lamos
Subject: Support HB231, which outlaws the declawing of cats

Dear Honorable Committee Members:

As you may know, “declawing” is a misnomer. This major surgical procedure actually entails the removal of the entire first joint of a cat’s toe, rendering the animal maimed for life. Declawed cats cannot run, jump, and play as normal cats do, and their painful paws often lead them to avoid the litter box or engage in other unacceptable behaviors. If people don’t want an animal with claws, they should not get a cat. To take a healthy, happy animal and surgically modify it merely to suit our own convenience is morally reprehensible.

Many American and other cities as well as the states of New York and Maryland have outlawed this barbaric procedure, and I sincerely hope New Hampshire will join this march toward a more humane future.

Yours most sincerely—Gale J. Lederer



March 21, 2023

Ms. Cheryl Catrambone
Executive Director
New Hampshire Veterinary Medical Association
P.O. Box 247
Amherst, NH 03031

Re: NH HB 231, prohibiting the removal of claws from cats.

Dear Ms. Catrambone:

I am writing to express the American Veterinary Medical Association's opposition to HB 231, which would prohibit the declawing of cats and assign criminal penalties for performing the procedure. Although the AVMA discourages onychectomy (declawing) of cats as an elective procedure and encourages veterinarians to counsel their clients about non-surgical alternatives, we have grave concerns about legislative and regulatory actions that remove the professional judgment of veterinarians in determining when to perform specific veterinary procedures.

Good animal health and welfare is supported by the veterinarian's ability to apply professional judgment within the context of the veterinarian-client-patient relationship

The adoption of HB 231 would circumvent the professional judgment of New Hampshire veterinarians and disrupt the veterinarian-client-patient relationship, which has long been the foundation of veterinary medical practice. Best health and welfare outcomes for veterinary patients, clients, and the public require that decisions involving the diagnosis and treatment of veterinary patients—including the performance of surgical procedures, such as declawing—be made by the animal's veterinarian in consultation with the animal's owner. This ensures that each animal receives the best possible care that is uniquely tailored to its needs. Veterinarians must retain authority to exercise professional judgment in making clinical recommendations that are in the best interest of their patients.

Viable alternatives to legislative and regulatory action

With respect to onychectomy, and as an alternative to legislative and/or regulatory action, the AVMA strongly recommends that veterinarians thoroughly educate cat owners about the normal scratching behaviors of cats and that they support their clients in exploring and implementing alternatives to declawing.

The AVMA assists veterinarians in these efforts by providing educational resources (example attached) that can help them communicate effectively with their clients. If such alternatives fail, with a potential consequence being the relinquishment and/or euthanasia of the cat, then onychectomy becomes the option of last resort. These statements are supported by a survey of veterinary practices that revealed most veterinarians recommend nonsurgical alternatives to onychectomy and that veterinarians who perform the surgery do so infrequently, at a rate of one procedure or fewer per month.¹

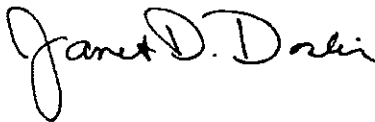
Pain management and patient outcomes

Veterinarians recognize that onychectomy is a major surgery. Perioperative pain management is necessary and required for this procedure. Just as for other surgical procedures, advancements in knowledge and technology mean that onychectomy procedures have evolved. Contemporary approaches to onychectomy have resulted in fewer surgical complications and better patient outcomes.

Declawing is a controversial procedure; however, we speak for the profession in voicing our opposition to HB 231 and ask that every effort be made to ensure that veterinarians retain their ability to apply their professional judgment when it comes to medical and surgical decisions that impact the health and welfare of their patients. Veterinarians have an obligation to consider the unique needs of the patient that is in front of them and a duty to inform their clients of a given procedure's risks, benefits, and alternatives. Declawing is neither unique nor singular in that regard. We thank you for supporting our patients, their owners, and our profession by protecting the ability of veterinarians to act in their patients' best interests.

For questions regarding this letter, please contact Dr. Kendall Houlihan, Associate Director, Division of Animal Welfare, at 847-285-6685 or khoulihan@avma.org.

Sincerely,



Janet D. Donlin, DVM, CAE
Executive Vice President and Chief Executive Officer

¹ Ruch-Gallie R, Hellyer PW, Schoenfeld-Tacher R, et al. Survey of practices and perceptions regarding feline onychectomy among private practitioners. *J Am Vet Med Assoc* 2016;249(3):291-298.



Scratching is a normal behavior of cats. It conditions the claws, serves as a visual and scent territorial marker, allows the cat to defend itself, and provides healthy muscle engagement through stretching. In many cases, a cat can be trained to scratch only appropriate surfaces. However, a cat's excessive or inappropriate scratching behavior can become destructive or cause injury to people in the home.

ALTERNATIVE TRAINING AND MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

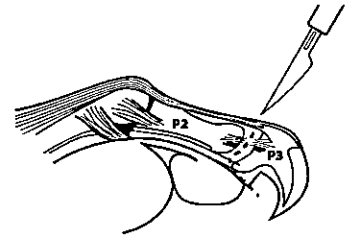
- Providing appropriate scratching surfaces, such as dedicated posts and boards that are tall enough to encourage full stretching. What constitutes an attractive surface or location varies by cat, so don't be afraid to get creative! Scenting with catnip may help too.
- Frequent nail trims - every 1-2 weeks
- Nail caps - replaced every 4-6 weeks
- Positive reinforcement training, beginning with kitten kindergarten if available
- Pheromone sprays and/or plug-ins
- Discourage use of inappropriate surfaces by attaching sticky tape or tinfoil
- Punishment is not an effective deterrent

WHEN THE ALTERNATIVES AREN'T ENOUGH

When undesirable scratching is not able to be successfully managed, or a member of the household is immunocompromised with a higher risk of health complications as a result of accidental scratches, declawing may be the only alternative to relinquishment or euthanasia. While not a first choice, nor a minor procedure, if properly performed declawing may allow a pet cat to remain in an otherwise good home.

Declawing is the surgical amputation of a cat's claws and the third toe bones to which they are attached.

Most cats will still exhibit scratching behavior after declawing. If performed, this elective orthopedic surgery requires general anesthesia and comprehensive pain management under the care of an experienced veterinarian. Like any major surgical procedure, possible complications include short- and long-term pain, bleeding, infection, and wound reopening.



MAKE A THOUGHTFUL CHOICE

Because elective declawing is performed for the benefit of the owner rather than the cat, the procedure remains controversial. The decision to have a cat declawed should be carefully considered in consultation with your veterinarian. Declawing should only be performed after reasonable behavior modification attempts and alternatives have been exhausted. Declawed cats should not be allowed outdoors, unless they are under direct supervision.

To learn more visit avma.org/declaw

Nikolas Lamos

From: Katrina Yurenka <kyurenka@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 24, 2023 12:28 PM
To: Kevin Avard; Howard Pearl; Regina Birdsell; Debra Altschiller; David Watters; Nikolas Lamos
Subject: Support HB 231 -- prohibiting cat declawing

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Dear Chairman Avard and Members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

I am writing to express my support for House Bill 231 to prohibit the removal of claws from cats. I support this bill because declawing cats is cruel and inhumane. It is the same as a human having their fingers cut off at the knuckle. If a cat's claws are not okay with you, then consider a different pet like a goldfish.

Please support HB 231 when it comes before your committee on March 28. It's time to put an end to this cruel and outdated practice.

Katrina Yurenka
Jaffrey, NH

Nikolas Lamos

From: Wendy Jensen <jensenhvp@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 24, 2023 1:15 PM
To: Kevin Avard; Howard Pearl; Regina Birdsell; Debra Altschiller; David Watters; Nikolas Lamos
Subject: support HB 231 -- prohibiting cat declawing

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Dear Chairman Avard and Members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

I am a veterinarian in support of House Bill 231 to prohibit the declawing of cats for non-medical purposes. I declawed cats for many years before stopping this practice myself. I stopped because the pain and suffering was not justified. The removal of the last toe joint created cats who resort to biting, which is far more serious, rather than raising a paw to claw. (To keep my technicians safe, I would mark in the declawed cat's record to be cautious when handling this patient.) In addition to biting, many cats suffer subsequent chronic pain and lameness. There are many many ways to prevent furniture destruction without this mutilation. In particular, this surgery is often performed on kittens, before they have had any training, and before they have even shown any tendency to harm furniture or people.

Please support HB 231.

Thank you for all the work you do!

Wendy Jensen, DVM
Bow, NH

she/her/hers

But I Already Said Goodbye, my new novel exploring the link between animal abuse and domestic violence, is available for preorder at <https://www.blackrosewriting.com/literary/butialreadysaidgoodbye> prior to the publication date of May 11, 2023. Use the promo code: **PREORDER2023** for a 15% discount.

<https://tinysseedjournal.com/2021/11/25/twilight-before-dawn/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/jensenhomeopathy/>

Practical Handbook of Veterinary Homeopathy

New World Veterinary Repertory

Nikolas Lamos

From: Nuha Haddad <nuha.haddad10@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 24, 2023 2:48 PM
To: Howard Pearl; Kevin Avard; Regina Birdsell; Debra Altschiller; David Watters; Nikolas Lamos
Subject: Support HB 231 -- prohibiting cat declawing

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Dear Chairman Avard and Members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

I am writing to express my support for House Bill 231 to prohibit the removal of claws from cats:

I support this bill because it is cruel and unproven to help cats or humans!

Scratching posts will solve the problem of scratching your furniture.

Declawing is amputation!

“Declawing” is a misleading name. I think some cat owners don't understand that it is amputation! The procedure cuts off more than claws: it **amputates** part of the cat's toes. This highly painful amputation can cause suffering, health, and behavior problems for the rest of the cat's life.

Please support HB 231 when it comes before your committee on March 28. It's time to put an end to this cruel and outdated practice.

Nuha Haddad
Concord, NH



**ANIMAL LEGAL
DEFENSE FUND** EST
1979

525 East Cotati Avenue
Cotati, California 94931

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info@aldf.org
aldf.org

March 23, 2023

Senator Kevin Avard, Chair
Senator Howard Pearl, Vice Chair
Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee
New Hampshire General Court, SH Room 103
107 North Main Street, Concord, NH 03301

Re: Support for *An Act prohibiting the removal of claws from cats* (HB 231)

Chairman Avard, Vice Chairman Howard Pearl, and honorable members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

On behalf of the Animal Legal Defense Fund and our supporters in New Hampshire, thank you for this opportunity to submit a letter of support for *An Act prohibiting the removal of claws from cats* (HB 231). We thank the Prime Sponsor, Representative Mike Bordes for introducing this important legislation along with Representative Ellen Read, and the Committee for your consideration.

The Animal Legal Defense Fund is the nation's preeminent legal advocacy organization for animals. Our mission is to protect the lives and advance the interests of animals through the legal system. As a core component of that mission, we advocate for laws that protect animals from cruelty, including cat declaw bans, which prioritize animals' well-being and respect for their natural behaviors.

Just this month, the Animal Legal Defense Fund released the seventeenth annual year-end report, ranking the animal cruelty laws of all fifty states based on twenty different categories of animal protection. New Hampshire ranked in the top tier — thirteenth in the nation — for its strong animal protection laws (aldf.org/staterankings). This top-tier positioning reflects the General Court's ongoing commitment to animal protection.

This important bipartisan animal protection legislation will bring New Hampshire in line with modern day veterinary science and perspectives on the humane treatment of animals—living, feeling beings capable of a wide range of positive and negative experiences and deserving of protection from cruelty. We urge the advancement of this bill to protect cats from declawing—a cruel and outdated practice that is unnecessary except in rare cases to protect a cat's health, such as a diagnosis of cancer of the nail bed.

All too often, animals suffer for the sake of human desires and preferences. In the case of cat declawing, the result can be a lifetime of pain and distress.

Lacking critical information, many have turned to declawing as a way to preempt or stop cats' natural behavior: scratching. But this procedure is highly invasive, causes pain that can linger throughout a cat's lifetime, and often leads to behavioral issues — such as the cat engaging in biting behavior as a result of feeling vulnerable as they can no longer provide a warning or defend themselves with their claws.

Declawing, technically known as onychectomy, is a serious surgical procedure which involves removing the last bone (in whole or in part) of a cat's toes — not just the claws. It's not just the immediate aftermath that's painful. Because cats walk on their toes, the loss of their toe bones changes their posture and balance, which can lead to chronic pain. Nerve and tissue damage, infection, and painful claw regrowth are additional risks.

Declaw surgical procedure

Declawing is a highly invasive surgery—a series of amputations of the last bones of the ten front and sometimes also the eight rear toes. This procedure is similar to severing a human finger at the last knuckle. The procedure is commonly performed for convenience rather than for the cat's well-being. For example, many people have their cats declawed to prevent them from scratching furniture. Besides post-surgical pain and the inability to perform natural behaviors like scratching, there are other negative implications for well-being associated with declawing.

Declawing, or onychectomy, is a serious medical procedure where a cat's third phalanges (toe bones) and claws are surgically removed. The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) states it "should be regarded as major surgery."

Medical and behavioral implications of declawing

A recent study published in the *Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery* found that declawing has a detrimental effect on cats' well-being.¹ The study found:

- a clear association between declawing and the presence of deleterious side effects after the typical postoperative period in a comparatively large sample population.
- a significant increase in the odds of developing adverse behaviors, including biting, barbering, aggression, and inappropriate elimination, as well as signs of back pain, among declawed cats.

Complications from the surgery itself include "anesthetic complications, hemorrhage, infection and pain." And after the recovery period, declawing can result in lifelong physical and behavioral problems. Declawing can cause permanent disability. Specifically, a declawed cat is at risk of pain in the paw, lameness, infection, dead tissue, nerve damage, bone spurs, and back pain. Cats are naturally digitigrades (meaning animals who walk on their toes). Declawing changes the way that a cat walks, and over time, this imbalance can also cause chronic pain. If the nail is not removed properly, it can regrow, an incredibly painful process for cats.

Since declawing inhibits a cat's normal means of movement and defense, behavioral impacts can also result. Documented effects of declawing include interference with litterbox use. Other cats may resort to biting because they have been stripped of their primary defense mechanism. Declawing fundamentally hinders a cat's natural instincts to use their claws to stretch, scratch, and mark territory.

¹ https://pawproject.org/pdfs-resources/MORAN_JFMS_FINAL.pdf

There is no evidence that declawing reducing shelter admissions — in fact, the behavioral implications, such as problems with litterbox use and biting, are common reasons cats are surrendered. Furthermore, all major animal protection organizations oppose declawing. A primary (or substantial) goal of many of these organizations is to reduce the killing of healthy companion animals in shelters.

Alternatives to declawing

Scratching is a normal, healthy behavior for cats. Scratching is not intended to be destructive. Cats scratch because it is an effective way to stretch their back muscles, relieves stress, enables cats to mark their territory, and keeps their nails in good condition. Cat nails have layers, called “husks.” Scratching removes those outer layers to make room for newer, stronger nails.

Behavioral training and nail trimming are humane ways to reduce unwanted effects of scratching. There are extensive online resources about training your cat to use a scratching post or similar item instead of your furniture. Offering a variety of attractive materials to scratch (such as cardboard or carpet) in different positions (upright or horizontal) is also effective. Keeping nails trimmed is another important course of action. Additional options are to cover furniture, use deterrent sprays, or restrict a cat’s access to certain rooms within the home.

Existing declaw bans

New York and Maryland are the first states to ban declawing cats. Other states and the District of Columbia have proposed legislation but have yet to codify the bans into law. Additionally, numerous U.S. cities have banned declawing, including Los Angeles, San Francisco, Austin, Denver, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, and more. It’s prohibited in multiple Canadian provinces and over twenty countries around the world, including the U.K., France, Germany, Spain, Israel, and Brazil.

Support for declaw bans to protect public health

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) does not support declawing cats. Its website outlines how ill and immune-compromised individuals can live safely with their companion cats and does not include declawing in its list of recommendations for reducing cat scratching. Instead, the CDC recommends avoiding rough play and trimming cats’ nails frequently. Furthermore, guidelines about living with HIV, jointly produced by the CDC, the National Institutes of Health, and the HIV Medicine Association of the Infectious Diseases Society of America, states “declawing is not advised.”

Additionally, the American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) explains, “current research demonstrates the greater value of proper hygiene and parasite control in the prevention of most common zoonoses (i.e., diseases spread from animal to humans)” as compared to cat declawing.

Support for declaw bans to protect the health and well-being of cats

The American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) strongly opposes declawing as an elective procedure, noting there are “inherent risks and complications with declawing that increase with age such as acute pain, infection, nerve trauma, as well as long term complications like lameness, behavioral problems, and chronic neuropathic pain.”

The AVMA strongly advises against declaw; the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA), the Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association (HSVMA), and the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) oppose the practice as an alternative to relinquishment. Additionally, more and more veterinarians are refusing to perform this procedure on ethical grounds, citing that it is an invasive convenience surgery. The largest privately owned veterinary practice in the United States,

with over a thousand clinics nationwide, Banfield Pet Hospitals, recently stopped offering elective declaw surgeries and strongly opposes the procedure.

In conclusion, declawing is a highly invasive surgical procedure with serious medical and behavioral implications. Effective alternatives to declawing exist, and a growing number of veterinarians, veterinary practice groups, and other professional organizations as well as state and local governments are phasing out declawing except in rare cases of medical necessity to protect a cat's health. For the foregoing reasons, we strongly encourage the advancement of this important bipartisan animal protection legislation in the legislative process.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Harris

--

Stephanie J. Harris | Senior Legislative Affairs Manager
Animal Legal Defense Fund | aldf.org
sharris@aldf.org | 617-955-7500



Nikolas Lamos

From: WILLIAM TRENTLY <trentlyzit@aol.com>
Sent: Friday, March 24, 2023 5:21 PM
To: Kevin Avard; Howard Pearl; Regina Birdsell; Debra Altschiller; David Watters; Nikolas Lamos
Subject: HB 231

Dear Committee Members:

Having claws is part of what it means to be a cat. We should not remove them just for our own convenience. Please support HB 231!

Sincerely,

William M. Trently DMD
Stratham, NH 03885

Nikolas Lamos

From: Diane Richardson <workingclasscanine@msn.com>
Sent: Friday, March 24, 2023 5:37 PM
To: Kevin Avard; Howard Pearl; Regina Birdsell; Debra Altschiller; David Watters; Nikolas Lamos
Subject: HB231 cat declaw

Dear committee

You will be hearing testimony on the cat declaw bill hb 231 this week

As you know this is a repeat effort on this bill

I am opposed to this bill as feline declawing is a medical decision to be made between a veterinarian and a client, the same as any other procedures including spay and neuter which are elective convenience surgeries (a female spay surgery is incredibly invasive abdominal surgery that involves major organ removal, abdominal muscle cutting and abdominal skin cutting).

This decision should not be for anyone but the veterinarian and owner to decide.
At the last go round this bill was killed

I ask you to do the same this year

Thank you for your very hard work

Diane Richardson
Georges mills, nh
Workingclasscanine@msn.com

Nikolas Lamos

From: Koz iPad <mlkos@me.com>
Sent: Friday, March 24, 2023 5:42 PM
To: Kevin Avard; Howard Pearl; Regina Birdsell; Debra Altschiller; David Watters; Nikolas Lamos
Subject: HB 231 - Declawing of Cats
Attachments: HB-231-Flyer.pdf

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

I am a resident of Hollis, NH. I am also an animal lover, particularly of cats.

I hope you have seen the brochure regarding the cruel rarely medically necessary procedure when cats are declawed. Imagine having all your fingers and thumbs amputated at the knuckle closest to the fingertip.

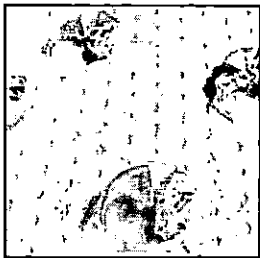
This procedure is not as common as in years passed but it is inhumane in this day and age that it is allowed at all.

I respectfully request that you vote to pass HB 231 that makes the declawing of cats illegal.

Thank you.
Marylou Kosmatka



A bill to prohibit removing a cat's claws unless medically necessary



Declawing requires the amputation of the last bone on each of a cat's toes.

Along with lingering pain, declawing can lead to lameness, arthritis, and behavioral problems, including biting and urinating outside the litter box.

Why should I support HB 231?

Declawing is no longer recommended by veterinary professionals

At one time, declawing was considered essential for keeping a cat in the home.

But now we know that declawing can cause lingering pain, behavioral changes, and even long-term health problems for cats.

Today, top veterinary behaviorists and the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) agree that declawing should not be considered a routine or preventive procedure.

Declawing does not protect human health

The CDC does not recommend declawing as a means of preventing disease in either healthy or immunocompromised individuals.

Declawed cats are known to bite more often and harder than clawed cats, making them even more of a health risk for young, elderly, or immunocompromised people.

NH veterinarians will still be allowed to declaw if medically necessary

House Bill 231 includes an exemption that allows a veterinarian to perform declaw surgery when necessary to address a medical condition that compromises the cat's health, such as illness, infection, disease, injury, or abnormality.

Although it has become less common, declawing still happens in New Hampshire

Data on the number of declaw surgeries performed in New Hampshire is hard to come by, because the procedure is now formally discouraged in the veterinary community.

But declawed cats continue to show up in New Hampshire shelters, so we know the surgery is still being done.

Some veterinarians strongly support HB 231, because it provides them with support for refusing to perform a declaw procedure when requested by a client.

A vote for HB 231 is a vote for cats and the people who love them — which includes your constituents!

Nikolas Lamos

From: Jeannette Nieder <airdrie@myfairpoint.net>
Int: Saturday, March 25, 2023 10:31 AM
To: Kevin Avard; Howard Pearl; Regina Birdsell; Debra Altschiller; David Watters; Nikolas Lamos
Subject: Opposition to HB231-FN: PROHIBITING THE REMOVAL OF CLAWS FROM CATS

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Good morning

First – thank you all for your service to New Hampshire. I am adding my name to those opposing this bill. There are times when the removal of claws is the difference between a cat leading a comfortable life in a forever home or needing to be given up because their owner is on blood thinners or very fragile skin and cannot risk an accidental scratch. My mother was one of those people who loved her cats and small dogs – they kept her company, entertained her and offered unconditional love. They gave her a routine to her day caring for her pets. A cancer survival with severe rheumatoid arthritis – she needed to take care to avoid infections. I can't imagine how my mother's quality of life would have been diminished had she needed to place her companion cats because claw removal was illegal.

We have so much to deal with in these times – school shootings, fake school shooting reports, inflation, bank failures, unrest. Many senior citizens live in assisted living or apartments that only permit cats. If this bills goes through would these facilities change their policies with concern of cat claws damaging the property? Adding another obstacle to a small comfort to senior citizens seems very unreasonable.

I agree with the Dogs of the Granite State's statement to please permit this to be an individual owner and their veterinarian's decision. Please vote against this bill!

Thank you for your kind consideration
Jeannette Nieder

Nikolas Liamos

From: Brian Fleming <brian.d.fleming@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, March 25, 2023 11:36 AM
To: Kevin Avard; Howard Pearl; Regina Birdsell; Debra Altschiller; David Watters; Nikolas Liamos
Subject: Support HB 231 -- prohibiting cat declawing

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Dear Chairman Avard and Members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

I am writing to express my support for House Bill 231 to prohibit the removal of claws from cats.

I support this bill because there is no legitimate reason to abuse cats like this.

Please support HB 231 when it comes before your committee on March 28. It's time to put an end to this cruel and outdated practice.

Sincerely,

Attorney Brian Fleming
Portsmouth, NH

Nikolas Liamos

From: booth117@gmail.com
Sent: Saturday, March 25, 2023 12:32 PM
To: Kevin Avard; Howard Pearl; Regina Birdsell; Debra Altschiller; David Watters
Cc: Nikolas Liamos
Subject: SUPPORT HB231 -- PROHIBITING CAT DECLAWING

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

March 25, 2023

To: The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

Dear Chairman Avard, Members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, and Committee Aide:

I am writing to express my **support for House Bill 231 to prohibit the removal of claws from cats.** I have worked in cat rescue for 35 years and have seen first-hand the problems "declawed" cats have including, often, pain-related behavior like biting and avoiding the litter box because scratching is painful. "Declawing" can cause nerve damage, phantom pain, pain from bone fragments left behind, and arthritis. In addition to paw pain, "declawing" can also result in infection, tissue necrosis, and lameness.

"Declawing" is actually the amputation of the last bone of each toe. It would be like cutting off your fingers at the last knuckle. The standard method of declawing is amputating with a scalpel or guillotine clipper. The wounds are closed with stitches or surgical glue, and the feet are bandaged. Another method is laser surgery, in which a small, intense beam of light cuts through tissue by heating and vaporizing it. Both can cause lasting physical problems for your cat. "Declawing" is a cruel and unnecessary practice.

Dozens of countries and the state of New York have banned "declawing".

For the above reasons I ask you to join me in supporting HB 231 Prohibiting Cat Declawing, which is actually the removal of the last bone of each of the cat's toes.

Thank you.

Anne Booth (Sharon, NH)

booth117@gmail.com



Virus-free www.avg.com

Nikolas Lamos

From: Cindy <honeypothounds@aol.com>
Sent: Saturday, March 25, 2023 9:11 PM
To: Nikolas Lamos
Subject: Please oppose HB 231-FN

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Dear Senator Lamos,

I am writing as a NH resident from Mont Vernon in opposition of HB 231-FN, an act prohibiting the removal of claws from cats.

NH shelters are filled with homeless cats and kittens destined to spend their lives in a crate in a shelter if they cannot be placed in a home. Many homes these days are apartments and require a fulltime indoor life for the cat. While this may not be the life the cat would choose if it had the option of running free and hunting I think it is a much better life than sitting in a shelter crate year after year until it is euthanized. I think prohibiting the legal declawing of cats will limit some of these cats from being adopted and settled permanently in good homes and is therefore a death sentence.

Most cats today are indoor cats and young cats can be quite destructive to furniture and walls with their claws. When I was a child we had declawed indoor cats and they were quite happy and content and I don't think they even spent one moment wondering why their scratching (clawless) did not shred our furniture.

Yes, as with all surgeries, including spay/neuter, there is some down-time and recovery, but with modern medicine and caring owners this time is rather short and more comfortable than the alternative of being returned to the shelter time after time never having a real home to call her own.

Please oppose HB 231-FN.

Sincerely,
Cindy

Cindy Williams
Honey Pot Beagles & Chihuahuas
AKC Breeder Of Merit
New Hampshire
www.honeypothounds.com

Nikolas Liamos

From: b vegan <baerwolf@hotmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, March 25, 2023 9:49 PM
To: Nikolas Liamos
Subject: Support HB 231 - Prohibiting Cat Declawing

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Support HB 231 - Prohibiting Cat Declawing

Dear Chairman Avard and Members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

Please support House Bill 231 that prohibits the removal of claws from cats when it comes before your committee on March 28.

Declawing cats may have at one time been considered a way of protecting cats and their human families from harm. Now after years of research and voluminous case studies it has been found that declawing has caused debilitating harm to cats, increased problems to families with cats, and an increase in cat nonadoptability from shelters.

It's time to put an end to this cruel and outdated practice.

Thank you
Steve Baer
baerwolf@hotmail.com

Nikolas Lamos

From: Marla Fields <k9queen@metrocast.net>
Sent: Sunday, March 26, 2023 9:50 AM
To: Kevin Avard; Howard Pearl; Regina Birdsell; David Watters; Nikolas Lamos; Debra Altschiller
Subject: HB 231-FN - Please Oppose

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Dear Chairman Avard and Members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, I am writing as a NH resident from Epsom, Mr. Pearl's constituent, in opposition of HB 231-FN, an act prohibiting the removal of claws from cats. This is not a subject that should be legislated. This is a subject that should be left up to a cat owner and their veterinarian and what is best for the cat and the environment in which the cat lives. We are in the Live Free Or Die state and slowly our freedoms are being whittled away. This needs to be left up to the Vet and the Cat owner.

Please vote HB 231-FN Inexpedient to Legislate.

Sincerely,
Marla Fields

Nikolas Lamos

From: Media <Media@alleycat.org>
Sent: Sunday, March 26, 2023 2:55 PM
To: Kevin Avard
Cc: Howard Pearl; Regina Birdsell; Debra Altschiller; David Watters; Nikolas Lamos
Subject: SUPPORT: HB 231-FN - Prohibiting Cat Declawing

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

x

Delivered via email

March 26, 2023

The Honorable Kevin Avard
Chair, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
New Hampshire Senate
107 N. Main St.
Concord, NH 03301

RE: IN SUPPORT OF HB231-FN (Bordes) – Prohibiting the Removal of Claws From Cats

Dear Chair Avard and Members of the Committee:

As a representative of Alley Cat Allies, with our more than 6,800 supporters in New Hampshire, I am writing to express **my strong support for HB231-FN – Prohibiting the Removal of Claws From Cats**. I urge legislators to please support this bill, which has already passed the New Hampshire House of Representatives. If enacted into law, this bill will prohibit the declawing of cats, a cruel and painful procedure which involves severing a cat's toes at the knuckle.

Alley Cat Allies was first established in 1990 and is the leader of the global movement to protect the lives of cats and kittens. We work with lawmakers, shelters, and the public toward lifesaving laws and policies that serve the best interests of cats.

Also known as onychectomy, declawing is the surgical amputation of a cats' toes. It is almost always done for nontherapeutic purposes. A common but misguided motivation for declawing is to prevent cats from scratching furniture.^[1] Many opponents to declawing bans claim that owners, frustrated by cats scratching, could relinquish their cats to shelters if this procedure is no longer allowed.^[2]

This has not proven to be the case. After the City of Los Angeles banned declawing in 2009, the number of cats being relinquished to shelters *decreased* by 43 percent.^[3] Similarly, a peer-reviewed study on the impact from British Columbia's 2018 ban on declawing concluded that

“legislation banning elective onychectomy does not increase the risk of feline shelter relinquishment – for destructive behavior or overall – and is unlikely to have a significant effect on shelter euthanasia or length of stay.”^[4]

Conversely, declawing itself can cause behaviors that are among the top reasons people give or relinquish cats to shelters. A declawed cat is more likely to exhibit increased aggression and biting to compensate for losing her protective claws, her first line of defense. Declawing also leads to chronic pain, arthritis, balance issues, and back problems. The residual pain associated with declawing also can result in litter box avoidance.

Thanks to years of humane education and outreach by Alley Cat Allies and The Paw Project, Americans increasingly realize how detrimental declawing can be to a cat’s wellbeing. More have come to learn that declawing is a non-therapeutic and unnecessary surgery.

We invite animals into our homes as companions and family members. Having cats means caring for them, providing for them, and using humane solutions to solve behavioral issues. Claws are an extremely important part of a cat’s anatomy and life. We do not remove a puppy’s teeth to prevent him from chewing on shoes. Instead, understanding this is a behavioral need in response to teething, we provide the puppy with appropriate toys that allow him to carry out his instinctive desire to chew and minimize the discomfort. Similarly, we should not surgically remove a cat’s toes and permanently alter her health and wellbeing when humane behavior modifications are available and affordable.^[5] Scratching posts, deterrents, regular trimming, nail caps and plenty of toys help to redirect this natural and necessary instinct.

Declawing bans are becoming the law in more locations. New York state enacted a ban in 2019, Maryland followed in 2022, and 16 major cities including Los Angeles, San Francisco, Denver and Pittsburgh, and at least 42 countries, including Switzerland, Germany, and the United Kingdom, have outlawed the declawing of cats. New Hampshire will be at the forefront of this movement to ensure that cats will no longer be forced to undergo this inhumane and painful procedure.

I respectfully request you and the members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee to support HB231-FN and keep cats’ claws on their paws.

Sincerely,
Calley Gerber
Alley Cat Allies

cc:
Members, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
The Honorable Howard Pearl
The Honorable Regina Birdsell
The Honorable Debra Altschiller
The Honorable David Watters

Nikolas Lamos

From: dubliners@myfairpoint.net
Sent: Sunday, March 26, 2023 5:06 PM
To: Kevin Avard; Howard Pearl; Regina Birdsell; Debra Altschiller; David Watters; Nikolas Lamos
Subject: Support HB 231 -- prohibiting cat declawing

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Dear Chairman Avard and Members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

I am writing to express my support for House Bill 231 to prohibit the removal of claws from cats.

Please support HB 231 when it comes before your committee on March 28. It's time to put an end to this cruel and outdated practice.

Stephanie Keane
Dublin, NH

Regardless of the method used, onychectomy causes a significant level of pain. Patients may experience both adaptive and maladaptive pain. In addition to inflammatory pain, the cat may develop long-term neuropathic or central pain if its pain is inadequately managed during the perioperative and healing periods.

In human medicine, the reasons for phalanx amputation include 'tumors, malformations that affect function, infection, severe post-traumatic vascular damage or gangrene. Removal of the nail is done for ingrown toenail or paronychia' (A Hugo, 2014, personal communication). Similar medical conditions in a cat might indicate the need for a specific phalanx to be removed. This would not support the amputation of normal digits.^{10,12}

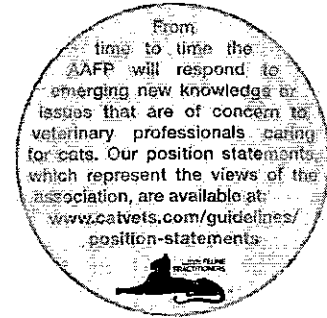
While it has been suggested that onychectomy is acceptable to prevent spread of zoonotic disease(s) to immune-compromised people,¹⁰ current research demonstrates the greater value of proper hygiene and parasite control in the prevention of most common zoonoses. In households where cats come into contact with immune-compromised individuals, extensive education about zoonotic disease potential should be discussed and documented in the medical record. Of note, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention does not advise declawing cats owned by HIV-infected persons; rather, these individuals 'should avoid rough play with cats and situations in which scratches are likely.'¹³

Because property destruction and human injury occur less commonly from the claws on the rear feet, four-paw declaws are not recommended.

There is no current peer-reviewed data definitively proving that cats with destructive behavior are more likely to be euthanized, abandoned or relinquished. The decision of whether or not to declaw should not be impacted by these considerations.

If surgical onychectomy must be performed for a medical purpose, anesthetic agents and perioperative analgesic medications is imperative. The AAFP believes that a multimodal pain management strategy of sufficient dose (potency) and duration is required for feline onychectomy. Such a protocol will lead to reduced patient stress, less pain, and reduced patient morbidity and mortality.^{14,15} Because one of their primary means of defense has been removed, declawed cats should be housed indoors and properly supervised for their protection when outside.

The AAFP reviews scientific data and supports controlled scientific studies that provide insight into all aspects of feline medicine. The AAFP recognizes that feline onychectomy is an ethically controversial procedure. It has been considered for prohibition in some US states and cities and Canadian provinces. It is currently prohibited in the European Union (including the United Kingdom),¹⁶ Australia, Brazil, Israel and some other countries, as well as several cities in California.



References

- 1 Canadian Veterinary Medical Association. Scratching behaviour is normal in cats. www.canadianveterinarians.net/documents/scratching-behaviour-is-normal-in-cats (2012, accessed June 9, 2015).
- 2 Cozzi A, Lecuelle CL, Monneret P, et al. Induction of scratching behaviour in cats: efficacy of synthetic feline interdigital semiochemical. *J Feline Med Surg* 2013; 15: 872–878.
- 3 Moesta A. Feline scratching of furniture: impact, owner attempts to prevent it and attitudes towards declawing – a survey of cat owners and veterinarians. MSc thesis, Graduate Faculty, The University of Georgia, USA, 2012.
- 4 American Veterinary Medical Association. Declawing of domestic cats. www.avma.org/KB/Policies/Pages/Declawing-of-Domestic-Cats.aspx (accessed June 9, 2015).
- 5 Mengoli M, Mariti C, Cozzi A, et al. Scratching behaviour and its features: a questionnaire-based study in an Italian sample of domestic cats. *J Feline Med Surg* 2013; 15: 886–892.
- 6 Rodan I, Simpson W, Monroe-Aldridge P, et al; American Association of Feline Practitioners. Positive reinforcement of cats. www.catvets.com/guidelines/position-statements/positive-reinforcement (2012, accessed June 9, 2015).
- 7 Soft Paws Brochure, Soft Paws, Inc. Lafayette, LA, USA, www.softpaws.com.
- 8 Feliway Brochure, Ceva Animal Health, LLC, 8735 Rosehill Road, Suite 300 Lenexa, KS 66215, USA, www.feliway.com.
- 9 Ellis SL, Rodan I, Carney HC, et al. AAFP and ISFM feline environmental needs guidelines. *J Feline Med Surg* 2013; 15: 219–230.
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- 14 Hellyer P, Rodan I, Brunt J, et al; American Animal Hospital Association; American Association of Feline Practitioners; AAHA/AAFP Pain Management Guidelines Task Force Members. AAHA/AAFP Pain Management Guidelines for Dogs and Cats. *J Am Anim Hosp Assoc* 2007; 43: 235–248.
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AAFP Position Statement Declawing

The American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) strongly opposes declawing (onychectomy) as an elective procedure. It is the obligation of veterinarians to provide cat owners with alternatives to declawing. If owners are considering declawing, they must be provided with complete education about feline declawing, including the anatomic details of what a declaw entails (ie,

amputation of the third phalanx [P3]) and the importance of proper pain management. In addition, alternatives to surgery and the risks and benefits of surgery need to be discussed.

It is important that owners understand that scratching is a normal feline behavior; it is both inherited and learned.¹ The primary reason for scratching is to maintain the necessary claw motion used in hunting

and climbing.² In addition, it is done to re-establish claw sharpness via 'husk' (or 'sheath') removal and to stretch the body. Finally, it is an important means of visual and olfactory communication. Scratching can be directed to areas that owners consider appropriate. The following steps should be taken to prevent destructive scratching and are alternatives to declawing.

Veterinarians should counsel owners to do the following:

- ❖ Provide suitable implements ('scratchers') for normal scratching behavior. Examples are scratching posts or pads, cardboard boxes, and lumber or logs. Scratchers may be vertical or horizontal. They should be tall or long enough to allow full stretching and stable enough so they do not move or fall over. Scratching materials preferred by cats include wood, sisal rope, carpet, cardboard and rough fabric. In one study, carpet-covered vertical scratchers were preferred.³ Owners may need to experiment with a variety of textures and types of scratchers to determine one or more that their cat prefers.⁴

Stringent attention must be given to both location and suitability, otherwise the cat may choose other areas/objects that are desirable to them, but not to the owner.⁵ Because cats often stretch and scratch upon awakening, a scratcher should be placed next to where the cat sleeps. It may also be effective to place a scratcher near the cat's preferred, yet undesirable scratching object (eg, the corner of a couch). In addition, access to the 'undesired' object needs to be temporarily denied by removing or covering/protecting it with a material that is aversive to the cat (eg, double-sided sticky tape, loose fabric, foil or plastic).³ Kittens and cats can be trained to use scratchers by enticing the

cat to the item with catnip, treats or toys, and by rewarding behavior near or on the scratcher. If the cat scratches elsewhere, the cat should be picked up gently and taken to the scratcher, and rewarded. Cats should be positively reinforced and never punished.⁶



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- ❖ Provide appropriate claw care by regularly trimming the claws to prevent injury or damage to household items. Proper feline nail trimmers should be used to prevent splintering of the nails. Nail trimming frequency depends on the cat's lifestyle. Kittens, indoor-only and older cats will need more regular nail trims, whereas outdoor cats may naturally wear their nails and require less frequent trimming. Trim nails in a calm environment and provide positive reinforcement for the cat.⁶

- ❖ Consider temporary synthetic nail caps, which are available as an alternative to onychectomy (or surgical declawing). These caps are glued over the nails to help prevent human injury or damage to property. Nail caps usually need to be reapplied every 4-6 weeks.⁷

- ❖ Consider using synthetic facial pheromone sprays and/or diffusers to help relieve anxiety or stress.⁸ Application of synthetic feline interdigital semiochemical (FIS) on the desired scratcher has been shown to induce scratching behavior on an appropriate target.² At the time of publication, FIS is available only in Europe; Feliway (Ceva) can be used instead in countries such as the US where FIS is not available. In addition, deterrent materials (eg, double-sided sticky tape, foil, plastic) may be placed on the undesired scratching object.

- ❖ Provide appropriate feline environmental enrichment, which must be implemented for successful behavioral modification.⁹ Repetitive or increases in scratching behavior of indoor cats may be related to anxiety, stress, attention seeking, or lack of perceived security in their environment.^{2,5} Anxiety can be exacerbated by owner punishment, thus driving the cat to increase scratching behavior in the same or other locations.⁵

The surgical alternative of deep digital flexor tendonectomy can cause deleterious results due to the overgrowth of nails, the need for more extensive claw care required of the owner, and the development of chronic discomfort in some patients. Consequently, deep digital flexor tendonectomy is not recommended.

Onychectomy is not a medically necessary procedure for the cat in

most instances. There are inherent risks and complications with this surgical procedure that increase with age.¹⁰ These include, but are not limited to, the following: acute pain, hemorrhage, swelling, infection and nerve trauma.¹¹ Long-term complications include lameness, chronic draining tracts, retained P3 material leading to claw regrowth, development of palmigrade

stance, behavioral problems¹¹ and chronic neuropathic pain. Fewer than half of veterinary schools in the USA include a mandatory lecture or laboratory to teach this surgery. Lack of formal training in the procedure could lead to inferior surgical technique, thereby increasing the likelihood of both long- and short-term complications.¹⁰

Additional resources

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- ❖ Atwood-Harvey D. Death or declaw: dealing with moral ambiguity in a veterinary hospital. *Soc Anim* 2015; 13: 315–342.
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- ❖ Canadian Veterinary Medical Association. News release: Canadian Veterinary Medical Association opposes declawing of cats. <https://www.canadianveterinarians.net/news-events/news/news-release-canadian-veterinary-medical-association-opposes-declawing-of-cats> (2017, accessed August 8, 2017)
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- ❖ California Veterinary Medical Association. CVMA position statement and fact sheet on cat declaw. <https://cvma.net/government/legislative-issues/legislative-archives/cat-declaw/cvma-position-statement-fact-sheet-on-cat-declaw/> (accessed August 9, 2017)
- ❖ Kogan L and Hellyer P. CVMA member behaviors and attitudes surrounding feline declawing procedures. http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/colovma.site-ym.com/resource/resmgr/CVMA_Attitudes_Declaw_2014_V.pdf (2014, accessed August 9, 2017).
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Submitted by:

Nancy Suska DVM

Gerry Beekman DVM

Paula Monroe DVM

Carlye Rose DVM, DABVP (Feline; Canine & Feline), CVA

This Position Statement is an update on the AAFP's earlier Position Statement on declawing, dated September 2015.

^[1] The Paw Project, *Frequently Asked Questions About Feline Declawing*, <http://www.pawproject.org/faqs/>

^[2] Christine Hauser, *Cat Declawing Ban in Denver Would Be a First Outside California*, N.Y. TIMES (Oct. 25, 2017), available at [ps://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/25/us/denver-cats-claws.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/25/us/denver-cats-claws.html).

^[3] Brenda Barnette, general manager of Los Angeles Animal Services Department, February 2021.

^[4] Ellis et al., "Effect of a provincial feline onychectomy ban on cat intake and euthanasia in a British Columbia animal shelter system," *Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery*, September, 2021

^[5] <https://www.alleycat.org/community-cat-care/cat-behavior-scratching/>, Rubbing or spraying scratching posts with catnip, trimming their claws, nail caps (vinyl nail covers that can be applied by a veterinarian, groomer, or at home), or spraying the cat's target scratching area with a homemade or commercial deterrent.

Nikolas Liamos

From: Karen Campbell <klynncampbell50@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 26, 2023 8:26 PM
To: Kevin Avard; Howard Pearl; Regina Birdsell; Debra Altschiller; David Watters; Nikolas Liamos
Subject: Feline Declaw Bill HB 231

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

March 26, 2023

Dear Senators,

I am a small animal veterinarian and a boarded specialist in internal medicine practicing in New Hampshire. I am also the state's representative in the Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association. My career is devoted to making sure companion animals are healthy and happy. Dogs and cats are so beloved and are so important to people. They bring great joy to our lives and we need to make sure they are well cared for and loved whenever possible. I have been a veterinarian for 29 years and the knowledge base and standards of practice of veterinary medicine have changed over time, as we have gained knowledge. Some practices we thought were state of the art in 1994, have since been abandoned upon learning they are not as helpful as we had thought, or they are actually harmful to our companion animals. One such practice is declawing cats. Once we thought this procedure helped cats to remain harmoniously in their homes. Now we know this is not the case. Consequences of the procedure can actually lead to abandonment of the cats for subsequent behavioral problems that develop after the surgery. Because of this knowledge, I urge you to embrace our current understanding of this procedure and its ramifications, and to support House Bill 231 which bans declawing domestic cats as an elective procedure and allows declawing to be done only as medically needed, in the best interest of the cat.

The term declaw is misleading. Many cat owners do not realize that to remove a cat's claw, and ensure it does not grow back, the last bone on the toe has to be amputated. To declaw a cat is analogous to humans having the last bone removed from every finger and thumb on our hands. It is a painful procedure and it can have short term negative consequences such as hemorrhage, swelling and infection. It can have many long term consequences such as permanent lameness, arthritis, back pain, nerve trauma, bone chips, and behavior changes such as anxiety, aggression, biting, and litter box avoidance.

Past acceptance of the surgery has been due to the belief many cats would not be suitable pets unless they are declawed, due to scratching. This belief is not valid. Many countries, Canadian provinces, 1 US state and many US cities have banned elective declawing in domestic cats allowing several studies to be done regarding relinquishment rates once bans are in effect. The data shows relinquishment rates do not go up, and in several cases they actually go down. Other studies have shown cats who are declawed have higher rates of behavioral problems. They can't express themselves by marking their territory with scent glands on the pads of their feet, stretching and extending their claws and using their claws as defense. This makes some cats irritable and can cause them to bite. Instead of marking with scent glands, they mark the house with urine. Cats whose toes hurt find walking in litter painful so they will urinate outside the box. It makes sense then, that declawed cats are relinquished more frequently. Happily, there are less harmful alternatives such as scratching posts and nail caps.

Arguments have been made that it is safer for immune compromised people or hemophiliacs to have declawed cats. This simply is not true because these cats are more likely to bite and a bite is more serious than a scratch. The CDC, NIH, National Hemophiliac Foundation, etc are all on record saying declawing of cats is not advised to protect human health.

Simply put, time and studies have shown declawing cats does not benefit them or society. I urge you to support New Hampshire's domestic cats and their loving families by banning this procedure.

Dr. Karen Campbell, DVM, dip ACVIM, resident of NH (Derry and Epsom) since 2005

Nikolas Liamos

From: Kurt Ehrenberg <kehrenberg@humanesociety.org>
Sent: Monday, March 27, 2023 5:44 AM
To: Kevin Avard
Cc: Nikolas Liamos
Subject: Info on Cats and declawing (HB 231)
Attachments: DAVIDSON-LettertoSTERN_SB1441.pdf; AAFP-2017-DeclawingStatement.pdf

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Dear Chairman Avard,

Thank you for considering the Humane Society position on **HB 231** (Cat Declaw) .

Please Vote YES on HB 231 to prohibit cat declawing unless a veterinarian deems it necessary!

I wanted to provide this information from the **American Association of Feline Practitioners, (Strongly opposed to Declawing of cats)** *"The American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) strongly opposes declawing (onychectomy) as an elective procedure. It is the obligation of veterinarians to provide cat owners with alternatives to declawing."*

I also have attached a letter **dealing directly with human health issues** and cat claws from Dr. J. Gary Davidson, Director of the Leavey Cancer Center, Chief of Medical Oncology at Northridge Medical Center, Associate Director of Palliative Care at Northridge Medical Center. and Assoc. Clinical Professor at UCLA.

Excerpt:

*"In my 50 years of practice dealing with patients on various blood thinners, hemophiliacs, and people with significant immune deficiency problems, **I have never recommended declawing their pet cats for any reason** . I have never seen a significant bleed from any scratch a cat has delivered to my patients, and while the prevalence of Cat-Scratch disease is about one in 2000 people, this is a very rare disease as defined by the NIH. I have not seen any significant long-term problems with my patients who have cats in terms of their health or well-being."*

(full letter attached)

Please call me anytime with further questions or concerns.

Thanks again for your time and effort on this legislation.

Please Vote YES on HB 231!

Thank you so much for your continued consideration of the all the animals in our state!

Kurt

Kurt Ehrenberg

New Hampshire State Director, State Affairs

kehrenberg@humansociety.org

C 603 312 5988

humansociety.org



Nikolas Lamos

From: Sarah Hickey - Hils <shickeyhils@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, March 27, 2023 9:53 AM
To: Nikolas Lamos
Subject: Support HB 231

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Dear Nikolas,

I am writing to express my support for House Bill 231 to prohibit the removal of claws from cats.

I support this bill because declawing cats is mutilation. It's cruel and barbaric. I have two beautiful rescue cats and I would never dream of doing anything like that to them.

Please support HB 231 when it comes before your committee on March 28. It's time to put an end to this cruel and outdated practice.

Thank you,

Sarah Hils
9 Shaker Road
Canterbury, NH

Sent from my iPhone

Sent from my iPhone

April 14, 2018

The Honorable Henry Stern
State Capitol, Room 3070
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Cat claws and human health

Dear Senator Stern:

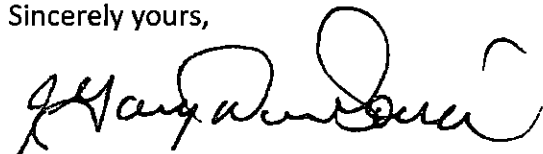
My name is Gary Davidson, I have been a practicing hematologist oncologist for 50 years, director of the Leavey Cancer Center in Los Angeles, associate clinical professor of medicine at UCLA.

In my 50 years of practice dealing with patients on various blood thinners, hemophiliacs, and people with significant immune deficiency problems, I have never recommended declawing their pet cats for any reason. I have never seen a significant bleed from any scratch a cat has delivered to my patients, and while the prevalence of Cat-Scratch disease is about one in 2000 people, this is a very rare disease as defined by the NIH. I have not seen any significant long-term problems with my patients who have cats in terms of their health or well-being.

As I said before, I would not, under any circumstance, recommend the declawing of their cats. While declawing a cat may save some furniture in the house, other than causing misery for the animal, it would have no significant impact on the health of my patients.

Please contact me if you need any further information.

Sincerely yours,



J. Gary Davidson, M.D.

Director Leavey Cancer Center

Chief of Medical Oncology Northridge Medical Center Associate Director Palliative Care
at Northridge Medical Center. Assoc. Clinical Professor UCLA.

Nikolas Liamos

From: doc Taylor <docvet1@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, March 27, 2023 10:35 AM
To: Howard Pearl; Regina Birdsell; Debra Altschiller; David Watters; Nikolas Liamos
Subject: House Bill 231 - to Ban elective declawing of cats

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Dear Legislators:

My name is Dr. Barry Taylor. I graduated from Purdue University with my DVM in 1985. I opened the Franklin Veterinary Clinic in NH in 1989.

I just wanted to reach out to you to voice my support for HB 231.

I have never, in the 34 years I have owned my own clinic, found it necessary to perform an elective declaw procedure in a cat. In addition, I have never had one of my clients state to me that they would have to surrender their cats to a shelter because they have claws.

Trimming a cat's nails is a simple and quick procedure that can be performed easily at home or very inexpensively by a groomer or veterinary clinic.

The declaw procedure, as I'm sure you are aware, is much more than just "removing a claw". Because of a cat's anatomy, this surgical procedure removes the last bone in each digit, severing it at the knuckle.

Whether this procedure is performed with a scalpel, a specialized declaw instrument, or laser, it is uniquely painful as the paws have extremely high concentrations of nerve endings and the inevitable result of severing a nerve is the formation of a neuroma - a little cluster of nerve endings that are the cause of "phantom pain" syndrome in amputees.

Declawed cats are more likely to have behavioral issues, including biting, house soiling, and anti-social behavior toward other household animals.

I strongly support this bill and I regret that I am not available to speak at Tuesday's hearing. Please allow this letter to speak for me, and feel free to reach out to me personally.

Sincerely,
Barry N. Taylor DVM
39 Hill Rd
Franklin, NH 03235

603-934-7179

Nikolas Liamos

From: Lana Nickerson <fossmtfarm@msn.com>
Sent: Monday, March 27, 2023 11:53 AM
To: Nikolas Liamos
Subject: Oppose HB231-FN

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Dear Member,

I am a resident of Eaton, NH and am writing to oppose the bill prohibiting the declawing of cats. This is a decision that should be made by a veterinarian, not a legislative body. As far as I know, no veterinarian would do this surgery unless they felt it was absolutely necessary for the health of the cat. This bill is a solution to a non-existent problem.

Please vote this inexpedient to legislate.

Sincerely,

Lana Nickerson

Foss Mountain Farm Alpacas and Ragdoll Cats

PO Box 244 35 Foss Mountain Rd

Eaton Center NH 03832

603-447-6548 (landline)

www.fossmtfarm.com

Nikolas Lamos

From: Caroline Bogart <caroline.bogart@gmail.com>
sent: Monday, March 27, 2023 2:05 PM
To: Kevin Avard; Howard Pearl; Regina Birdsell; Debra Altschiller; David Watters; Nikolas Lamos
Subject: Support HB 231 -- prohibiting cat declawing

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Dear Chairman Avard and Members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee,
I am writing to express my support for House Bill 231 to prohibit the removal of claws from cats.

I am shocked that we still allow the cruelty of pulling claws from cat toes.

This is incredibly cruel.

Anyone who gets a cat and cannot deal with the fact that they have claws DOES NOT DESERVE THE BEAUTY OF A CAT IN THEIR HOME.

Please support the bill to outlaw being cruel to cats.

Thank you,

Caroline Bogart

15 Center St. Litchfield

Nikolas Liamos

From: Gail K. DeMasi <gaildemasi@live.com>
Sent: Monday, March 27, 2023 2:10 PM
To: Nikolas Liamos
Subject: Oppose HB 231 FN

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Dear Nikolas Liamos and Members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

I am writing as a NH resident from the town of Munsonville.

I am writing in opposition of HB 231-FN, an act prohibiting the removal of claws from cats.

While I don't necessarily support declawing cats, *it should be left to veterinarians and owners*. The majority of NH Vets do not offer this procedure, so this is not a problem in NH.

Please vote HB 231-FN Inexpedient to Legislate.

Sincerely,

Gail DeMasi

Sent from Outlook

Nikolas Liamos

From: Kurt Ehrenberg <kehrenberg@humanesociety.org>
Sent: Monday, March 27, 2023 3:35 PM
To: Kevin Avard
Cc: Nikolas Liamos
Subject: Written Testimony on HB 231 (Cat Declaw Prohibition)

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Dear Chairman Avard and members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

I have attached written testimony in favor of HB 231 (prohibiting the removal of claws from cats). I have also included 10 reasons to ban cat declawing at the bottom of this email.

I look forward to seeing you tomorrow and answering any questions you may have.

Please feel free to contact me with any concerns, or if you would like further assistance in the future. Thank you again for the opportunity for the HSUS to provide input on this legislation.

Sincerely,
Kurt Ehrenberg

Kurt Ehrenberg
New Hampshire State Director, State Affairs
kehrenberg@humanesociety.org
C 603 312 5988
humanesociety.org



Ten Reasons to Ban Cat Declawing:

1. **Declawing is elective amputation of a cat's toes.** It's never done for the benefit of the cat's health or wellbeing.

Declawing is painful, often for life. Nerves, tendons and bone are severed. Some cats never fully recover and experience nerve damage, phantom pain, pain from retained bone fragments, infection or tissue necrosis.

3. **Cats need to scratch. Scratching is normal cat behavior;** it helps cats stretch, remove dead husks from their claws and adds their scent to their surroundings. Scratching is important for a cat's physical and mental wellbeing.
4. **Declawing is like wearing ill-fitting shoes, forever.** Toe amputations shift how cats walk which can lead to lameness and chronic issues with joints and arthritis.
5. **Declawing can put people at harm.** Declawed cats are more likely to bite, and cat bites carry a dangerously high infection risk to healthy and immunocompromised people alike, often requiring hospitalization. Declawing is not recommended by any human health agency.
6. **Declawing doesn't guarantee a cat will remain in the home.** Declawing can lead to pain-related behavior issues like biting and avoiding the litter box. These behaviors increase the risk of the cat being evicted from the home.
7. **Declawing is not performed in most countries of the world.** It's prohibited or considered unethical practice in most countries, including Sweden, Brazil, Germany, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and much of the European Union and Canada.
8. **A growing number of U.S. vets agree and oppose nontherapeutic declawing.** The American Association of Feline Practitioners and the Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association are opposed. The largest veterinary hospital systems in the U.S.—VCA, Banfield, and Blue Pearl—will not perform elective declawing.
9. **Declawing is still too commonly practiced and not only as a last resort. An estimated 20-24% of pet cats in the U.S. have been declawed.** Declawing is not a justifiable alternative to rehoming.
10. **There are alternatives!** Scratching posts, regular nail trims, behavior training, nail caps and double-sided tape applied to furniture are all viable and humane alternatives to declawing.

Thank you for your consideration!
Kurt



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

HB 231 - SUPPORT
Kurt Ehrenberg, NH Director
The Humane Society of the United States
kehrenberg@humanesociety.org
603-312-5988

HB 231 SUPPORT

Prohibiting The Declawing of Cats

NH Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee
March 28th, 2023

The Humane Society of the United States, the nation's largest animal protection organization, supports passage of HB 231, which would end the practice of nontherapeutic declawing of cats in the state. Declawing has serious implications for feline welfare and the bond between people and their cats. If passed, New Hampshire would join a rapidly growing number of communities taking a stand against this inhumane practice.

Convenience declawing of cats is already illegal in the states of Maryland and New York and in numerous counties, cities and towns across the country. It's banned in the city and county of Denver, Colorado, the city and county of St. Louis, Missouri and eight cities in California. Most recently, declaw bans have been passed in Austin, Texas, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Madison, Wisconsin. All by unanimous vote. Eight out of ten Canadian provinces prohibit non-therapeutic declawing.

Nontherapeutic declawing is banned or considered an unethical veterinary practice in a vast number of countries, from New Zealand to Brazil to the United Kingdom. The European Convention on the Protection of Pet Animals prohibits the procedure.

The veterinary community is increasingly opposed to declawing. The American Association of Feline Practitioners, the American Animal Hospital Association, the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association and the Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association are opposed. The major veterinary hospital chains, VCA, Banfield, and Blue Pearl, do not offer elective declaw procedures on cats. Many U.S. veterinary schools no longer routinely teach declaw procedures.

However, we can't continue to wait for the veterinary profession to end declawing on its own. These amputations are still too commonly practiced, and cat owners are often not made aware of the high risk of permanent adverse effects on cats or of the procedures' controversies – that

most veterinarians won't amputate a cat's toes unless there is a valid medical need.



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

Arguments in favor of declawing often center around the desire to prevent unwanted scratching of either furniture or people. Amputation is an extreme response to what can be addressed with regular nail trimming, a variety of scratching posts and a better understanding of feline behavior. Moreover, declawed cats are at a greater risk of developing more serious adverse behaviors after amputation, such as litter box aversion or an increase in biting and aggression, then the ones the amputations were meant to prevent.

In pain, and no longer able to defend themselves with their claws, cats may resort to biting. The documented increased biting behavior of declawed cats can lead to more severe disease in people than cat scratches. Cat bites carry a dangerously high infection risk to healthy and immunocompromised people alike. Infectious disease specialists do not recommend declawing. The National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Infectious Diseases Society of America jointly stated that declawing is “not advised” to protect the health of even severely immune-compromised patients.

There is a false narrative that cat owners unable to get their cat declawed are likely to relinquish that cat to an animal shelter or abandon that cat outdoors. The risk of a cat ending up homeless or worse, euthanized, due to a declaw prohibition is grossly overestimated. A recent study of data from British Columbia shelters covering the three years prior to and three years after a province-wide declaw ban went into effect showed that there was no increase in cats being relinquished or euthanized. The number of owner-surrender cats actually decreased after the ban. Publicly available data from Los Angeles also show no increase in cat intake at shelters citywide once declawing was prohibited.

The reality is that due to the higher prevalence of long-term adverse impacts of multiple amputations, declawing puts cats at a greater risk of eviction from their homes and relinquishment to shelters and rescue organizations. According to a study published in the Journal of American Veterinary Medical Association, among relinquished cats, 52.4% of declawed cats were reported to exhibit litter box avoidance, compared to 29.1% of non-declawed cats.

Declawing is no good for cats or people. It's time to end the practice.

On behalf of our members and supporters in New Hampshire, the HSUS asks members to vote Ought to Pass on this humane bill which will protect the health and well-being of family pets.

Thank You

Nikolas Lamos

From: Zephan Wood <zephanw@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 27, 2023 4:11 PM
To: Kevin Avard; Howard Pearl; Regina Birdsell; Debra Altschiller; David Watters; Nikolas Lamos
Subject: Support HB119

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Dear Members of the Committee:

I am a taxpayer and citizen of Pembroke, NH and support this bill for the following reasons:

*This bill will allow for greater innovation and participation in homestead food operations without facing excessive government barriers that inhibit action.

*It will allow me to start doing my own operation knowing that I will not be encumbered by excessive taxes and regulations.

*This bolsters the NH advantage and adds to the desirability of NH for your constituents.

Thank you and I hope you support this bill.

Sincerely,

Zephan Wood



March 27, 2023

Chairman Kevin Avar and Members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee –

I am writing on behalf of Dog Owners of the Granite State (D.O.G.S.) regarding HB 231-FN, *prohibiting the removal of claws from cats*. On behalf of our membership of responsible local pet owners and breeders, D.O.G.S. respectfully **opposes** this bill.

HB 231 will make it illegal for a licensed veterinarian to perform a safe procedure designed to protect the safety and welfare of cats and avoid them ending up in a shelter and being euthanized. This is not an issue of humane treatment of animals and actually legitimizes activist campaigns to unnecessarily restrict the rights of animal owners and veterinarians.

Legislation to limit the professional judgment of veterinarians is inappropriate. Lawmakers should not attempt to substitute their views on husbandry issues and veterinary medicine in general, for those of a licensed, professionally trained veterinarian.

Declawing of cats is **not** an issue in New Hampshire. As the NHVMA will testify to, veterinarians in NH rarely if ever perform the procedure. Many of the veterinary offices in NH do not offer the procedure. This, in addition to vets discouraging the procedure and educating clients on alternative options, show that the procedure is rarely, if ever, being performed in NH. Why are we creating legislation for something that isn't even an issue?

The AVMA discourages the declawing of cats as an elective procedure and supports non-surgical alternatives to the procedure. **The AVMA respects the veterinarian's right to use professional judgment when deciding how to best protect their individual patients' health and welfare.**

The AVMA position statement states "there is no scientific evidence that declawing leads to behavioral abnormalities when the behavior of declawed cats is compared to that of cats in control groups." Further, the surgical and analgesic techniques currently used for "declaw" surgery have dramatically advanced in the past 20 years, to make it a very safe and comfortable procedure. This bill, as all too often happens with animal legislation, is unfortunately based on the unfounded emotional claims of activists, rather than a dispassionate scientific foundation.

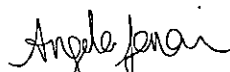
A survey by the AVMA of 273 owners, only found 1% (3 owners) reported that their cats exhibited negative behavioral changes following declawing.

While surgery of any kind has risks, when properly performed including correct post-operative care, any elective surgery can be safe and humane. Further, the decision whether to pursue any elective procedure is one that must be made between an animal owner and his or her veterinarian, not outside parties or mandated by law.

The only two states that recently adopted a similar bill are New York and Maryland (2022).

Arizona (TL'd this type of bill two years in row and similar bills have not moved forward in Florida or Virginia this year.

Again, thank you for considering my testimony on HB 231. Respectfully, I ask you vote this legislation **Inexpedient to Legislate** and rely on the expertise, competence, and compassion of trained veterinary professionals to determine the best outcomes for their patients.

Sincerely,  Angela Ferrari, President, D.O.G.S.

Nikolas Lamos

From: President, D.O.G.S. <president@nhdogs.org>
Sent: Monday, March 27, 2023 4:44 PM
Subject: Oppose HB 231-FN, prohibiting the removal of claws from cats
Attachments: DOGS Oppose HB231-FN.pdf

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Hello Chairman Kevin Avard and Members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

Attached please find the letter of Opposition from Dog Owners of the Granite State on HB 231-FN, *prohibiting the removal of claws from cats*.

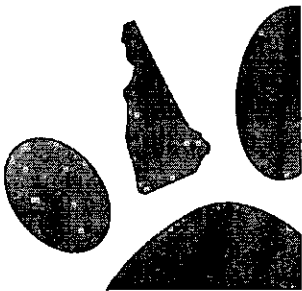
I look forward to providing my testimony tomorrow morning at the hearing.

--

Sincerely,
Angela

Angela Ferrari
angela@nhdogs.org

President, Dog Owners of the Granite State (D.O.G.S.)
President, Pilgrim Doberman Pinscher Club
Doberman Pinscher Club of America Supporting Member, Legislative Task Force Member, and Generation Forward Member
Souhegan Kennel Club Director
National Beagle Club Supporting Member
AKC Breeder of Merit



Nikolas Liamos

From: Elizabeth Reed <bkind4u.er@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 27, 2023 4:53 PM
To: Nikolas Liamos
Subject: Fwd: HB 231 Objection

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

From: Elizabeth Reed <BKIND4U.ER@gmail.com>
Date: March 27, 2023 at 4:47:02 PM EDT
To: Kevin.Avard@leg.state.nh.us
Subject: HB 231 Objection

Declawing of cats is not an issue in NH, Lawmakers should not attempt to direct and control decision made by owners and Licenced Veteranary professionals. This law could also result in more Cats in shelters as well, I object strongly to this Law.

Elizabeth Reed
Concord NH 03301

Sent from my iPad

Nikolas Lamos

From: Debra Perry <debraperry@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 27, 2023 6:11 PM
To: Kevin Avard; Howard Pearl; Regina Birdsell; Debra Altschiller; David Watters; Nikolas Lamos
Subject: Support HB 231 -- prohibiting cat declawing

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Dear Chairman Avard and Members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

I am writing to express my support for House Bill 231 to prohibit the removal of claws from cats.

I support this bill because cats need their claws, not only for defense but also for stability and ability in climbing, jumping, etc.

Personally I have witnessed the trauma of having a cat who was declawed by a prior owner and suffered pain daily from it. We brought her to the vet who did "exploratory surgery" since there was no outward sign of any issues but she was obviously in chronic pain with one paw especially. The surgery found that the cat was experiencing pain from the declawing/removal of part of her paws, in what she said is known as "phantom pain"--there is nothing to point at, but the pain is real and left over from "what used to be there that has been removed." So even after the declawing, our cat had to undergo that other surgery to try to find out what the issue might be, to no resolution sadly. All this unnecessarily.

Declawing is cruel, painful, unnecessary, and unethical.

Please support HB 231 when it comes before your committee on March 28. It's time to put an end to this cruel and outdated practice.

Sincerely,

Debra Perry
Hampton, NH

Nikolas Liamos

From: NEH <fmkaffen@ix.netcom.com>
Sent: Monday, March 27, 2023 6:23 PM
To: Kevin Avard; Howard Pearl; Regina Birdsell; Debra Altschiller; David Watters; Nikolas Liamos
Subject: Oppose HB 231-FN

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Dear Chairman Avard and Members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

I am writing as a NH resident from the town of New Boston in opposition of HB 231-FN, an act prohibiting the removal of claws from cats.

This is not a matter for discussion by the legislature but one for a discussion between an animal owner and their veterinarian.

Only people who are trying to keep their pet cats, under difficult circumstances for their household, consider having this procedure done. It is not cheap to do. It is not easy to find a veterinarian who will do the procedure.

There are other less costly or difficult alternatives for people who own cats to pursue instead, such as leaving the cat permanently outdoors, abandoning it, giving it away, killing it or surrendering it to a shelter. The people who choose to declaw do so because they want to keep their cats. This seldom is a first choice but rather a choice of necessity for a person who wants to keep their pet. It is interesting the law states it is not cruel if it performed "in order to address the physical medical condition" but it will be illegal if the surgery could save the cat's life because the owner needs the claws removed in order to keep it. Either the procedure is cruel or it is not. Saying sometimes it is not makes no sense.

Despite the statistics for the numbers of declawed cats that are guessed at, vs those not declawed, a similar proportion of such cats do not show up in shelters and when they do appear they are eagerly adopted by people who have been waiting a long time for a cat they can live with safely unlike other adult cats that languish overlooked for a long time in shelters.

Any medical procedure can sound horrendous when presented with that intent. The most commonly performed medical procedure done for owner convenience is spay or neuter each of which permanently changes the animal and can have negative consequences. Watching an explicit video or having those procedures described in the worst way could impact your views on them.

I don't think the NH legislature should be deciding veterinary care issues. I believe this should be left to the owner and their veterinarian, as individual cases should be decided individually. Painting all such choices with a broad brush and not allowing for individual circumstances does not, to me, seem to be the New Hampshire way.

Please vote against HB 231.

Nancy Holmes

New Boston, NH

Nikolas Lamos

From: ahantz <ahantz@minutemanpress.com>
Sent: Monday, March 27, 2023 8:15 PM
To: Howard.Pearl@leg.state.nh.us; Regina.Birdsell@leg.state.nh.us;
Debra.Altshiller@leg.state.nh.us; David.Watters@leg.state.nh.us; Kevin Avard; Nikolas Lamos
Subject: Hb231 Oppose

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Hello Chairman Avard and Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Members,

My name is Andrea Hantz and I live in Epping, NH. I breed and show persian cats.

I oppose HB 231 for the following reasons:

I contacted 8 veterinarian offices, more than half say they do not offer the procedure, which leads me to believe the procedure is relatively unpopular. Those that will do it, they say that they discourage the procedure and offer alternatives. I think that we should let the veterinarians continue to educate their clients about declawing and not make them lawbreakers if they decide, in conjunction with the owner of the cat, that the procedure will improve the quality of life of the cat.

This is not something that is necessary to have written into law, as it will open the flood gates to legislating other procedures veterinarians can perform. I think that it is with both public education and veterinary guidance that will effectively curb this problem. In fact, I believe that it already has.

There are some kittens who are born with rear dewclaws. These are fragile nails that would easily catch and tear if not removed. It's probably in the best interest of the kitten to have a veterinarian surgically remove them to avoid potential future injury. With HB 231 in place, it will take an actual injury before the veterinarian could legally remove these claws. If this passes, next year we'll probably end up seeing a bill to prevent dewclaw removal on dogs, and who knows what else. This is just the stepping stone of unnecessary oversight of veterinary professionals.

Thank you for your consideration and I hope you will vote this bill inexpedient to legislate.

Andrea Hantz
Epping NH

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone


Nikolas Lamos

From: Cindy Morrissey <cbmorrissey2013@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 27, 2023 8:19 PM
To: Kevin Avard; Howard Pearl; Regina Birdsell; Debra Altschiller; David Watters; Nikolas Lamos
Subject: PLEASE pass HB231!

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Good morning,

Cat declawing is a horribly painful and inhumane procedure, Please outlaw it today!

Thank you so much 

Nikolas Lamos

From: Caroline Wilkinson <caroline@spicycats.org>
Sent: Monday, March 27, 2023 9:00 PM
To: David Watters; Debra Altschiller; Howard Pearl; Kevin Avard; Regina Birdsell; Nikolas Lamos
Subject: HB231

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

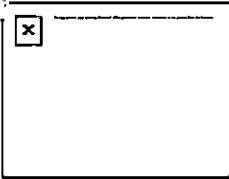
To the members of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee:

On behalf of all of us here at Spicy Cats Rescue, I urge you to pass HB231. We have seen firsthand the negative impacts of declawing cats: the pain, the surgical complications, the resulting behavior issues. Declawing is a selfish procedure, purely for the convenience of humans who couldn't care less that it would leave the animal in lifelong agony. Veterinarians advocate against it. Shelter workers advocate against it. Pet lovers advocate against it. Please vote in favor of HB231 and in favor of cats' right to live a pain free life.

Thank you -

--

Caroline Wilkinson She/Her



Spicy Cats Rescue

[Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [TikTok](#)

[Donate to our kitties!](#)

[Prepare for pet emergencies](#)

Nikolas Lamos

From: Amanda Rybicki <cocopuma@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 5:56 AM
To: Kevin Avard; Howard Pearl; Regina Birdsell; Debra Altschiller; David Watters; Nikolas Lamos
Subject: Please support the passage of HB231 to ban cat declawing- please read 9am vote

Dear Senators,

Please ban cat declawing. It remains the animal defenseless and in tremendous pain. I am an overall animal lover and I would never ever ever ever take claws from any animal. They don't deserve mistreatment.

We need all paws on deck!

Please support the passage of HB231 to ban cat declawing! The vote is today at 9am and I need your help to make sure there is no more inhumane cruelty to animals.

Thank you,
Amanda Rybicki
15 Oak Hill Circle
Atkinson NH 03811
978-821-2006

Sent from my iPhone

Nikolas Lamos

From: Tonemarie Bratteng <tbratteng@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 6:47 AM
To: Kevin Avard; Howard Pearl; Regina Birdsell; Debra Altschiller; David Watters; Nikolas Lamos
Subject: Support HB 231 -- prohibiting cat declawing

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Dear Chairman Avard and Members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

I am writing to express my support for House Bill 231 to prohibit the removal of claws from cats.

I support this bill because the removal of a cats claws is cruel and the negative consequences are many. In actuality , the removal of a cats claws requires the removal of the first knuckle of the cats toes. Please imagine if someone were to amputate the tips of your fingers just because they didn't like your nails, and how that would feel. This amputation causes cats a lifetime of pain and brings with it a lifetime of problems for not only the cat but the caretaker of the cat. A cat who has been declawed now lives in constant pain from being unable to live the life he was meant to live. Arthritis develops from being unable to walk properly and in addition, cats are unable to stretch their bodies properly without their claws, causing further pain and physical disability. They are less likely to use the litter box because the litter granules become painful to their toes. Cats who have been declawed are also far more likely to bite because they have lost their ability to give warning signs with their paws and nails which initially would be a gentle swat for a cat with its claws intact.

Please consider that cats are living beings who suffer greatly when we inflict unnecessary and cruel medical procedures on them that have no place in a civilized society striving for kindness and fairness. Cats need our protection, empathy, and compassion because they too deserve to live happy lives.

Please support HB 231 when it comes before your committee on March 28. It's time to put an end to their cruel and outdated practice.

Tonemarie Grochala
Milford, NH

Nikolas Lamos

From: Teri Young <tayoung285@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 8:31 AM
To: Nikolas Lamos
Subject: Please oppose HB 231, declawing cats

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Dear Chairman Avard and Members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

I am writing as a NH resident from the town of Weare and would like to share my opposition to the proposed legislation that would ban cat declawing and impede on property rights. I understand that you are concerned about the welfare of cats, but I believe that this legislation is an overreach of government power and will have unintended consequences.

Cats are considered property under the law, and their owners have the right to make decisions about their care in conjunction with their veterinarian, including whether or not to declaw. Cat declawing is a safe procedure that can prevent cats from scratching people and jeopardizing their health.

Banning cat declawing would impede on the property rights of NH residents and would make it difficult for them to make decisions about the care of their pets. This legislation would also have unintended consequences, such as increasing the number of cats that are abandoned or surrendered to shelters and ultimately euthanized.

I urge you to reconsider this legislation and to respect the property rights of your constituents.

Teri Young
Weare, NH

Nikolas Liamos

From: azerba09@comcast.net
Sent: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 9:04 AM
To: Kevin Avard; Howard Pearl; Regina Birdsell; Debra Altschiller; David Watters; Nikolas Liamos
Subject: NH House Bill 231

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Dear Representatives:

My name is Alexandra Zerba, and I reside in Bow, NH. I am writing to urge you to support House Bill 231, prohibiting the removal of claws from cats, sponsored by Representatives Mike Bordes (R-Laconia) and Ellen Read (D-Newmarket.)

Many people do not realize what cat declawing is. As the Humane Society explains on its website <https://www.humanesociety.org/resources/why-declawing-bad-your-cat>, "*Declawing is the amputation of the last bone of each toe. It would be like cutting off your fingers at the last knuckle.*" The recovery of this surgery is extremely painful and leaves the cat defenseless and most often with litter issues. Veterinarian, Christine Schelling, launched a website (www.declawing.com) to educate cat owners about this surgical procedure. She states that "*Declawing is serious surgery. Your cat's claw is not a toenail. It is actually closely adhered to the bone. So closely adhered that to remove the claw, the last bone of your the cat's claw has to be removed. Declawing is actually an amputation of the last joint of your cat's "toes". When you envision that, it becomes clear why declawing is not a humane act. It is a painful surgery, with a painful recovery period. And remember that during the time of recuperation from the surgery your cat would still have to use its feet to walk, jump, and scratch in its litter box regardless of the pain it is experiencing. Wheelchairs and bedpans are not an option for a cat.*"

Thank you for your time and consideration. I hope you will support House Bill 231.

Please contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Alexandra Zerba
Bow, NH 0330
603-340-8307

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
HB 231 - Prohibiting the removal of claws from cats

March 28, 2023

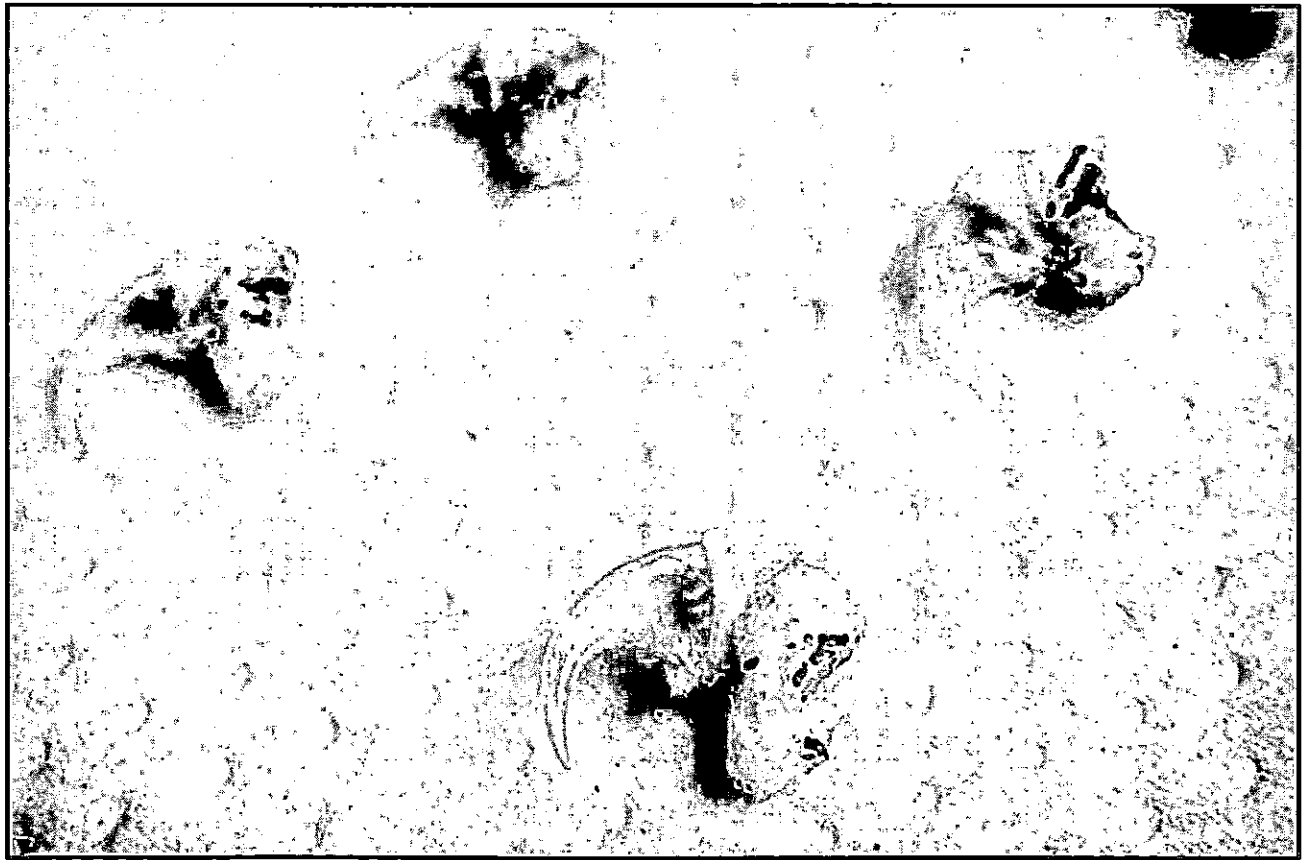


Supporting Documents

- **AVMA Formally Discourages Declawing of Cats**
Today's Veterinary Business, January 14, 2020
- **HSVMA Leadership Council stands against feline declawing**
August 2020
- **Pain and adverse behavior in declawed cats**
Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery, March 23, 2017
- **Declawing is never the answer – The Paw Project**
- **Effect of a provincial feline onychetomy ban on cat intake and euthanasia in a British Columbia animal shelter system**
Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery, August 14, 2022



Results of Onychectomy (Declawing)



NEWS

AVMA Formally Discourages Declawing of Cats

The House of Delegates approves language respecting “the veterinarian’s right to use professional judgment.”

January 14, 2020 | Issue: Online



Ken Niedziela



The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) has revised its policy on cat declaws, opting to discourage the procedure rather than rely on client education as a way to shed light on other options.

The updated policy was approved by 84% of the House of Delegates after a 90-minute floor discussion during a meeting in Chicago.

Some speakers, among them Texas alternate delegate Sam Miller, DVM, called on colleagues to keep the existing policy.

“We do not advocate for declaws at all,” he said. “But there are times when it is a procedure that needs to be considered ... after thorough education with the owner,” Dr. Miller said.

Rhode Island delegate Cathy Lund, DVM, was one of several members who strongly supported the measure, partly because of growing public opposition to declaws, or onychectomies. New York State and a collection of U.S. cities ban the declawing of cats.

AVMA Formally Discourages Declawing of Cats

The House of Delegates approves language respecting “the veterinarian’s right to use professional judgment.”

January 14, 2020 | Issue: Online

“We here at the House of Delegates are doing amazing work keeping up with changes in what’s happening in this country,” Dr. Lund said. “We think it’s really, really important that we evolve with the times.”

AVMA’s Public Matters Reference Committee took up the matter a day before and recommended approval of the revised policy. Committee member Neil Moss, DVM, the delegate from Utah, was one of only a few veterinarians who raised the possibility of no more declaws.

“Could we imagine a world where declawing of cats was just banned?” he said.

“If there was a ban on declawing, then this whole debate would go away. In England, they banned docking of tails unless there’s a medical necessity, and I think that would possibly be the statement that could be made: that we should ban the declawing of cats unless it’s a medical necessity.”

The House of Delegates, concerned that veterinarians be allowed to exercise their professional judgment during patient health care, tweaked the wording of the revised policy but in the end kept the bulk intact. It now reads:

“The AVMA discourages the declawing (onychectomy) of cats as an elective procedure and supports non-surgical alternatives to the procedure. However, the AVMA respects the veterinarian’s right to use professional judgment when deciding how to best protect their individual patients’ health and welfare. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the veterinarian to counsel the owner about the natural scratching behavior of cats, the alternatives to surgery, as well as the details of the procedure itself and subsequent potential complications. Onychectomy is a surgical amputation and if performed, multimodal perioperative pain management must be utilized.”

HSVMA Leadership Council stands against feline declawing

The AVMA's recent statement discouraging feline onychectomy as an elective procedure aligns with the popular stance throughout the global veterinary profession, but will it prompt more states to ban the procedure?

By Holly Cheever, DVM, Anne Fawcett, BA(Hons), BSc(Vet)(Hons), BVSc (Hons), MVS GradCertEdStud, MANZCVS (Animal Welfare), DECAWBM (AWSEL), and Nicholas H. Dodman, BVMS, DACVB, DACVAA

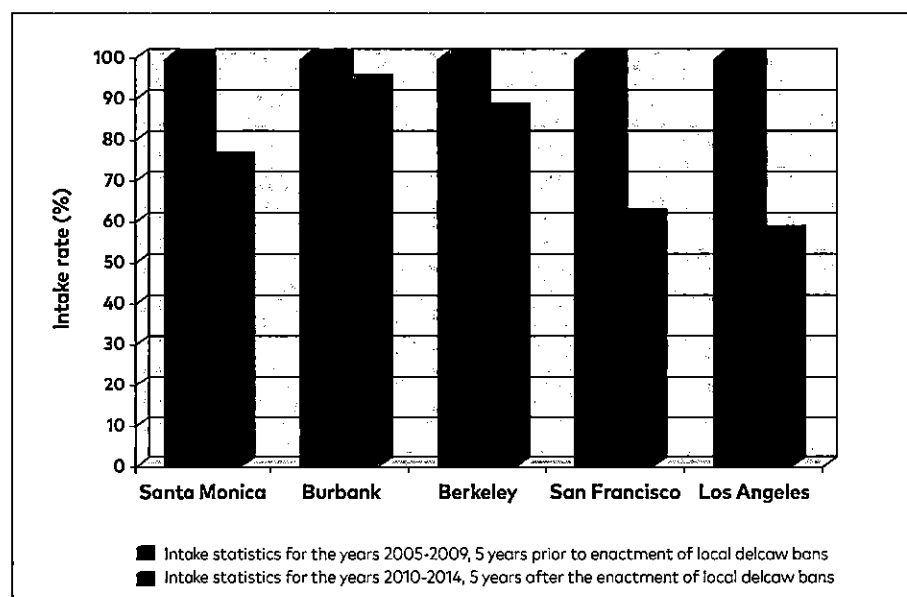
The Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association is pleased that the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) has amended its position statement to reflect disapproval of feline declawing (onychectomy). According to the current statement, AVMA "discourages the declawing of cats as an elective procedure and supports nonsurgical alternatives," stressing that "onychectomy is a surgical amputation and, if performed, multimodal perioperative pain management must be utilized."¹

The AVMA is moving closer to the position of our many international colleagues who have expressed strong disapproval of declawing cats by making the procedure illegal in their countries.

Declawing frowned upon worldwide

In the United Kingdom, declawing was banned in 2006; anyone convicted of declawing a cat could face up to a year in prison and/or a fine of £20,000 (just over \$26,000).² Across continental Europe, the procedure is forbidden by the European Convention for the Protection of Pet Animals. It is also illegal or discouraged in many other countries, including Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, and Israel.

According to the Australian Veterinary Association's policy on surgical alteration of companion animals' natural functions for human convenience, declawing of cats is not supported or recommended because it is a type of surgery



Shelter intake rates before and after enactment of local cat declawing bans in California cities show that banning this procedure does not result in increased relinquishment to shelters. Data compiled by Paw Project; used with permission.

that does not benefit animals.³ This is consistent with policies of other Antipodean animal welfare organizations, including the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Australia.⁴

We no longer need to feel conflicted or embarrassed by rejecting a practice that a majority of our international veterinary peers already eschew on the grounds that it causes dysfunction, deformity, and long-term pain, and is simply inhumane.⁵

Refuting the arguments in favor of onychectomy

Proponents of declawing invariably justify the procedure on utilitarian grounds, claiming that it would yield the greatest outcome for the largest number of stakeholders, but this position is difficult to defend. For

example, the longstanding AVMA debate on declawing cats was fueled by supporters who believe that a nondeclawed cat is more likely to be abandoned to a shelter by an owner with no tolerance for scratching/marking behaviors. Thus, cats would be "better off" declawed and remaining in their homes. But the American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP)⁶ and Canadian Veterinary Medical Association⁷ refute this contention, citing a lack of evidence that declawing protects cats from relinquishment, abandonment, or euthanasia.

Examination of publicly available intake and adoption records from five California cities between 2005 and 2014—before and after declaw bans were instituted—shows no correlation between a ban on declawing and

increased surrender to shelters.

In fact, fewer cats were surrendered after the procedure was banned (Figure 1). Additionally, data from the California cities show that fully clawed cats are no harder to place in new homes than declawed cats.

Cats do not benefit from onychectomy. Given that there are noninvasive alternatives, such as redirection of scratching behavior, environmental enrichment, and nail trimming or capping, it is difficult to support declawing on ethical or animal welfare grounds. Indeed, veterinarians who declaw cats may experience moral stress because they may feel they are acting against their values. This stress may contribute to psychological morbidity and even mortality among veterinarians.^{8,9} Veterinarians can >>

employ their considerable expertise by spending time with owners discussing the true downsides of declawing, dispelling hearsay, and providing viable alternatives for modifying cats' scratching behavior.

Some veterinarians in favor of declawing opine that modern surgical techniques may reduce negative sequelae. However, there is no good evidence to support these contentions. In a head-to-head study of onychectomy and tendonectomy,¹⁰ there were no significant differences in negative postoperative sequelae between the two techniques.

Another concern veterinary professionals who condone declawing have cited as a reason for wishing to continue to perform the procedure is that immunocompromised owners might be scratched while interacting with their cat, potentially leading to serious infection. However, inquiries by The Paw Project into the protocols of preeminent American and international health organizations—including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institutes of Health, US Public Health Service,

Infectious Diseases Society of America, American Cancer Society, National Hemophilia Foundation, and World Health Organization—reveals that these groups recommend against declawing, primarily because cats lacking claws (their primary defense) could resort to biting, with much more deleterious effects on the patient and/or owner. Additionally, the AAFP and American Animal Hospital Association agree that declawing cats is not recommended to enhance the health and well-being of family members.

Looking to the future

We were also pleased when New York State banned declawing in 2019, as public concern about the procedure continues to grow. After the bill became law, New York State Assemblywoman and author of the legislation Linda B. Rosenthal, said, “New York becomes the first state in the nation to ban cat declawing. Declawing is cruelty, plain and simple, and with so many low-cost and pain-free alternatives available, there is no reason to allow this barbaric practice to continue, not here in New York

or anywhere. It's a wonderful day for the cats of the state and the people who love them. Now that my bill has become law, New York has been catapulted onto the leaderboard of humane states, and we expect other states to quickly follow in our footsteps.”

We certainly hope that will be the case, particularly with AVMA's recently revised position. *dvm360*

Drs. Cheever, Fawcett, BA (Hons), and Dodman are all members of the Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association Leadership Council. Dr. Fawcett lectures at the Sydney School of Veterinary Science.

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Why we need more veterinary colleges at HBCUs

By Jonathan Dumas

The first Black man to earn a Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine degree did so 123 years ago, in 1897. Seventy-one years ago, in 1949, the first Black woman followed in his footsteps. It has been 75 years since the establishment of Tuskegee University College of Veterinary Medicine (TUCVM), but African Americans today make up only 2.1% of the veterinarian workforce. It's time for us to address this lack of diversity among American colleges of veterinary medicine.

Despite TUCVM producing roughly 70% of all African-American veterinarians, Black Americans continue to be underrepresented in the profession. In the past 10 years, five new colleges of veterinary medicine were established at Midwestern University, Lincoln Memorial University, Long Island University, University of Arizona, and Texas Tech University. None of these new colleges are at HBCUs.

According to the latest American Veterinary Medical Association data, 3% of the 13,548 students enrolled in US veterinary schools are Black, with African Americans treading behind all other

ethnic-minority groups except for American Indian/Native Alaskans, foreign nationals, and students who choose not to divulge their race/ethnicity.

It is imperative that we address the lack of diversity within the veterinary profession, but to do that we first must address systematic racism within higher education. The racism, oppression, and bigotry that have been the subject of recent public outcry exist within the confines of classrooms all across America, and lack of representation makes it nearly impossible for Black Americans to pursue a number of careers, including veterinary medicine.

To truly do away with the injustices against African Americans in this country means to provide HBCUs with appropriate funding. Moreover, to increase the number of Black Americans who pursue a Doctorate in Veterinary Medicine degree, there must be more colleges of veterinary medicine at HBCUs. *One is not enough!*

It is well past time for another veterinary school at one of our nation's HBCUs. Take your pick: Delaware State University, Florida A&M University, Lincoln University of Missouri, North Carolina

A&T State University, South Carolina State University, Tennessee State University, University of Arkansas Pine Bluff, University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Virginia State University, West Virginia State University, University of the District of Columbia, and many others.

Black lives matter, Black representation matters, and Black veterinarians matter! We are greater than 2.1%. *dvm360*

Jonathan Dumas is a third-semester student at Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine and is the current Student American Veterinary Medical Association/Student Government Association president.

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In Bill Folder



Pain and adverse behavior in declawed cats

Nicole K Martell-Moran¹, Mauricio Solano² and Hugh GG Townsend³

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Abstract

Objectives The aim of this study was to assess the impact of onychectomy (declawing) upon subsequent development of back pain and unwanted behavior in cohorts of treated and control cats housed in two different locations.

Methods This was a retrospective cohort study. In total, there was 137 declawed and 137 non-declawed cats, of which 176 were owned cats (88 declawed, 88 non-declawed) and 98 were shelter cats (49 declawed and 49 non-declawed). All cats were physically examined for signs of pain and barbering. The previous 2 years of medical history were reviewed for documented unwanted behavior such as inappropriate elimination and biting with minimal provocation and aggression. All declawed cats were radiographed for distal limb abnormalities, including P3 (third phalanx) bone fragments. The associations of declaw surgery with the outcomes of interest were examined using χ^2 analysis, two sample t-tests and manual, backwards, stepwise logistic regression.

Results Significant increases in the odds of back pain (odds ratio [OR] 2.9), periuria/perichezia (OR 7.2), biting (OR 4.5) and barbering (OR 3.06) occurred in declawed compared with control cats. Of the 137 declawed cats, 86 (63%) showed radiographic evidence of residual P3 fragments. The odds of back pain (OR 2.66), periuria/perichezia (OR 2.52) and aggression (OR 8.9) were significantly increased in declawed cats with retained P3 fragments compared with those declawed cats without. Optimal surgical technique, with removal of P3 in its entirety, was associated with fewer adverse outcomes and lower odds of these outcomes, but operated animals remained at increased odds of biting (OR 3.0) and undesirable habits of elimination (OR 4.0) compared with non-surgical controls.

Conclusions and relevance Declawing cats increases the risk of unwanted behaviors and may increase risk for developing back pain. Evidence of inadequate surgical technique was common in the study population. Among declawed cats, retained P3 fragments further increased the risk of developing back pain and adverse behaviors. The use of optimal surgical technique does not eliminate the risk of adverse behavior subsequent to onychectomy.

Accepted: 23 March 2017

Introduction

The onychectomy procedure (declawing) is performed across the USA and Canada to eliminate the possibility of property destruction and scratches. Medical indications for the procedure include removal of nail bed neoplasms and paronchia. Some believe that declawing will stop the spread of zoonotic diseases to immunocompromised cat owners.^{1–3} To avoid disease transmission from scratches, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend flea prevention, keeping cats indoors, away from strays and avoiding rough play with cats. However, declawing is not a recommended part of their strategy.⁴ The documented increased biting behavior of declawed cats can lead to more severe disease in people than cat scratches.⁵ In one study of cat-inflicted wounds

presented to an emergency room, none of the cat scratches resulted in infection, whereas 20% of bite puncture wounds became infected, with several requiring

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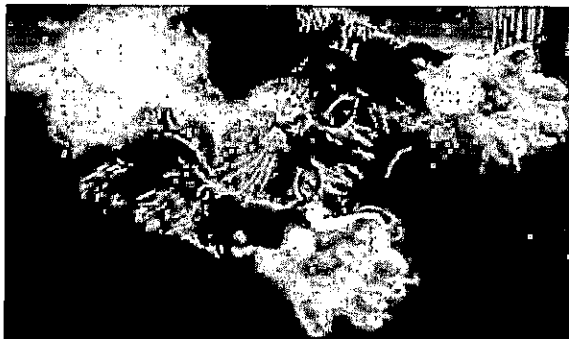
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Declawing is Never the Answer



The 
Paw 
Project

Paws to consider...

Declawing is amputation – not a fancy manicure.

Declawing Defined

Declawing is the amputation of cats' toe bones. It is not just a special manicure that can only be done by a veterinarian. The veterinarian must amputate each toe bone from which the claw grows in order to remove the claw. Declawing is one of the most painful surgeries performed by veterinarians, and yet it does not provide any benefit whatsoever for the cat. Declawing is cruel and is outlawed or considered unethical practice (*mutilation*) in many parts of the world.

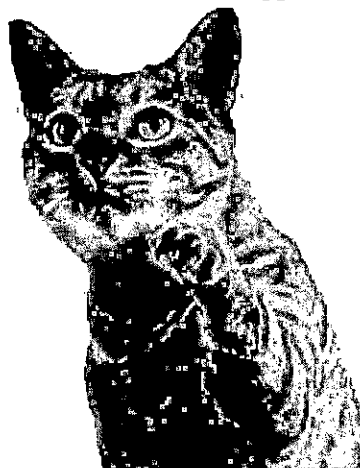
Tendonectomy, the severing of tendons to prevent cats from extending their claws and scratching, is also unacceptable. The claws can no longer wear down naturally and must be trimmed regularly to keep them from snagging or growing into the pads

Declawing and Chronic Pain

Cats who have been declawed may have pain in the remaining portions of their toes. Digging in the litter box can be so painful that they stop using the box altogether. They may have difficulty jumping or even walking. Many cats resort to biting because they are no longer able to defend themselves with their claws.

Declawing and Behavior

Declawing does not guarantee a cat will be allowed to stay in its home. Declawed cats may be more likely to be abandoned or relinquished to a shelter because of the problems in behavior known to be caused by declawing. Problems include avoiding the litter box and increased aggression (biting).



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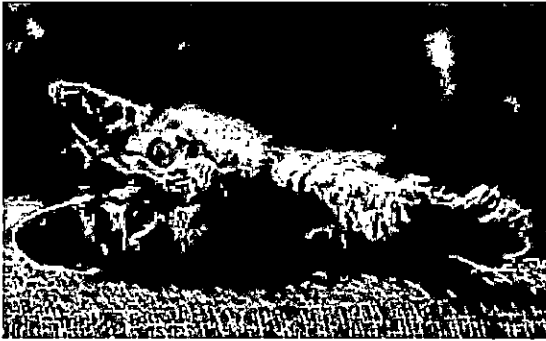
Sharing your Life and Home



The facts about declawing.

Cats are Special

Cats are special animals. They are loving and sensitive. Sharing your home with a cat is one of the best things you can do. You will love your new best friend and your new best friend will love you.



About Claws

Claws are an important part of what makes a cat, a cat. Cats use their claws to climb, exercise, balance and protect themselves. Spreading their toes and claws when they stretch is a sign that cats feel good. It is normal behavior for cats to scratch and a way for them to mark their territories both visually and with scent.



Proper Claw Care

Most cats have 10 toes on their front paws and 8 in back. Cat claws grow from within their toe bones, unlike human fingernails, which grow from skin. With a little patience and training, clipping claws can be easy, especially if you combine clipping with a reward, such as a treat. Cut only the tip of the sharp claw to avoid pain and bleeding from the pink quick. Groomers and vets can trim your cat's claws, too.

Good Scratching

Cats have individual preferences as to what surfaces they prefer to scratch. If your cats like to scratch on wood, a wooden scratching post is appropriate; if they like carpet, provide a carpet or sisal covered scratching surface. Corrugated cardboard is another preferred surface. Scratchers may be set upright, flat, or angled, according to your cat's preference. Scratchers must be placed in central areas of the living space and must be sturdy enough not to tip.

Human Health and Claws

Declawed cats are known to bite more often and harder than clawed cats, therefore declawing does not make cats safer for young, elderly, or immunocompromised people. The CDC, the Canadian Medical Association, and other human health care authorities recognize that fact and advise against declawing cats to protect human health. People in the many countries where declawing is not performed are able to live with clawed cats without problems.

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Effect of a provincial feline onychectomy ban on cat intake and euthanasia in a British Columbia animal shelter system

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Alexandre Ellis¹ , Karen van Haften², Alexandra Protopopova³ and Emilia Gordon²

Abstract

Objectives The aim of this study was to determine whether there was an increase in cat relinquishment for destructive scratching behavior, a change in overall feline surrender intake and euthanasia, or a change in average length of stay in a British Columbia shelter system after provincial legislation banning elective onychectomy.

Methods Records of cats admitted to the British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in the 36 months prior to (1 May 2015–30 April 2018, $n = 41,157$) and after (1 May 2018–30 April 2021, $n = 33,430$) the provincial ban on elective onychectomy were reviewed. Total intake numbers, euthanasia and length of stay were descriptively compared between periods. Proportions of cats and kittens surrendered for destructive scratching, as well as the proportion of cats and kittens surrendered with an owner request for euthanasia, were compared using two-sample z-tests of proportions.

Results Destructive behavior was found to be an uncommon reason for surrender (0.18% of surrendered cats) during the study period. There was no statistically significant difference in the number of cats surrendered for destructive scratching behavior ($z = -1.89$, $P > 0.05$) after the provincial ban on elective onychectomy. On the contrary, the proportion of owner-requested euthanasias decreased after the ban ($z = 3.90$, $P < 0.001$). The total number of cats surrendered, the shelter live release rate and average length of stay all remained stable or improved following the ban, though causation could not be determined.

Conclusions and relevance The findings in this study suggest that legislation banning elective onychectomy does not increase the risk of feline shelter relinquishment – for destructive behavior or overall – and is unlikely to have a significant effect on shelter euthanasia or length of stay.

Keywords: Onychectomy; declaw; shelter; relinquishment; surrender; intake; euthanasia; welfare; destructive behavior; length of stay

Accepted: 14 August 2021

Introduction

Elective onychectomy (declaw) is a procedure that consists of the amputation of the third phalanx (P3) of each digit. The procedure is generally requested by cat owners with the intention of avoiding damage to their property or personal injury from cat scratches.^{1–3} However, evidence suggests elective onychectomy can be associated with lameness, acute and chronic pain, as well as an increased risk of back pain, house-soiling, increased biting behavior and barbering in cats.^{2,4–6} Pain, lameness and changes in behavior can also be present in cats regardless of the method of amputation or anesthetic and

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Ethical approval This work involved the use of non-experimental animals only (including owned or unowned animals and data from prospective or retrospective studies). Established internationally recognized high standards ('best practice') of individual veterinary clinical patient care were followed. Ethical approval from a committee, while not specifically required for publication in *JFMS*, was nonetheless obtained, as stated in the manuscript.

Informed consent Informed consent (verbal or written) was obtained from the owner or legal custodian of all animal(s) described in this work (experimental or non-experimental animals, including cadavers) for all procedure(s) undertaken (prospective or retrospective studies). No animals or people are identifiable within this publication, and therefore additional informed consent for publication was not required.

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**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

HB 231 - SUPPORT
Kurt Ehrenberg, NH Director
The Humane Society of the United States
kehrenberg@humanesociety.org
603-312-5988

HB 231 SUPPORT
Prohibiting The Declawing of Cats
NH Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee
March 28th, 2023

The Humane Society of the United States, the nation's largest animal protection organization, supports passage of HB 231, which would end the practice of nontherapeutic declawing of cats in the state. Declawing has serious implications for feline welfare and the bond between people and their cats. If passed, New Hampshire would join a rapidly growing number of communities taking a stand against this inhumane practice.

Convenience declawing of cats is already illegal in the states of Maryland and New York and in numerous counties, cities and towns across the country. It's banned in the city and county of Denver, Colorado, the city and county of St. Louis, Missouri and eight cities in California. Most recently, declaw bans have been passed in Austin, Texas, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Madison, Wisconsin. All by unanimous vote. Eight out of ten Canadian provinces prohibit non-therapeutic declawing.

Nontherapeutic declawing is banned or considered an unethical veterinary practice in a vast number of countries, from New Zealand to Brazil to the United Kingdom. The European Convention on the Protection of Pet Animals prohibits the procedure.

The veterinary community is increasingly opposed to declawing. The American Association of Feline Practitioners, the American Animal Hospital Association, the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association and the Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association are opposed. The major veterinary hospital chains, VCA, Banfield, and Blue Pearl, do not offer elective declaw procedures on cats. Many U.S. veterinary schools no longer routinely teach declaw procedures.

However, we can't continue to wait for the veterinary profession to end declawing on its own. These amputations are still too commonly practiced, and cat owners are often not made aware of the high risk of permanent adverse effects on cats or of the procedures' controversies – that

most veterinarians won't amputate a cat's toes unless there is a valid medical need.

Nikolas Liamos

From: Kevin Avard
Date: Thursday, March 30, 2023 9:25 AM
To: Nikolas Liamos
Subject: FW: HB213-FN

Testimony

From: Joyce Arivella <jarivella@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 27, 2023 5:50 PM
To: Kevin Avard <Kevin.Avard@leg.state.nh.us>; Howard Pearl <Howard.Pearl@leg.state.nh.us>; Regina Birdsell <Regina.Birdsell@leg.state.nh.us>; David Watters <David.Watters@leg.state.nh.us>; Debra Altschiller <Debra.Altshiller@leg.state.nh.us>
Subject: HB213-FN

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee
March 27, 2023

HB231-FN
Relative to prohibiting the declawing of cats.

My name is Joyce Arivella and I live in New Boston, NH. I am a Maine Coon hobby breeder. My cattery is registered with, and I am a member of Tica, Cat Fanciers Association and Cat Fanciers Federation. I am writing on my own behalf.

I am writing in opposition to HB231-FN. Cats are generally declawed to protect the owner's furniture, walls, themselves or their children from being scratched. They can unintentionally be quite destructive and even harmful to their owners. Although there are ways to discourage this behavior they do not work with all cats. The population of cats in animal shelters is always very high. Declawing prevents abandonment and euthanasia.

Declawing can also be done by laser. This method minimizes bleeding and seals the nerve endings during surgery which means less pain, faster healing and fewer complications.

In my opinion, declawing should be a last resort that is decided between an owner and their veterinarian. However, if it is criminalized and owners feel as if they have no choice, then more cats will likely be abandoned outdoors or surrendered to our already cat-overpopulated shelters and rescues.

I have spoken to my veterinarian's office and they are not aware of any veterinarians in NH that declaw. That is not to say they wouldn't consider it should the health of the cat be at risk. Therefore, it seems to me that this is not a problem in NH and should be left to the discretion of our veterinarians and their clients, rather than put another unnecessary law on the books just for the sake of having it there.

I ask that you recommend HB231-FN "inexpedient to legislate". Thank you.

Respectfully, Joyce Arivella

Nikolas Liamos

From: Tricia Melillo
Sent: Thursday, March 30, 2023 9:25 AM
To: Nikolas Liamos
Subject: FW: HB231

I am just sending you the ones I don't see your name on.

From: Beth Elliott <belliott@nhspca.org>
Sent: Monday, March 27, 2023 5:38 PM
To: Kevin Avard <Kevin.Avard@leg.state.nh.us>
Subject: HB231

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

East Kingston, NH Good afternoon members of the NH Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

Thank you for your service to the State of NH and its constituents. I am a resident of East Kingston, NH and have lived in NH for more than 40 years.

Today I am writing to ask for your favorable vote on HB231. This bill supports the ban of declawing cats and kitten. Cats in NH deserve protection from this cruel and inhumane practice. I have worked in the animal care industry for over 30 yrs, first as a veterinary technician and now as an animal care technician. I have actually assisted veterinarians in performing this procedure and was never comfortable in amputating digits from an animals paw to deter a pet from what is a natural behavior, just to please an owner.

I feel that I must be the voice for these innocent animals that cannot advocate for themselves and ask that you do the same.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Beth Elliott

Nikolas Liamos

From: Tricia Melillo
Sent: Thursday, March 30, 2023 9:26 AM
To: Nikolas Liamos
Subject: FW: HB 231 Favorable Vote Requested

From: Sheila Ryan <sryan@nhspca.org>
Sent: Monday, March 27, 2023 4:51 PM
To: Kevin Avard <Kevin.Avard@leg.state.nh.us>; Howard Pearl <Howard.Pearl@leg.state.nh.us>; Debra Altschiller <Debra.Altshiller@leg.state.nh.us>; Regina Birdsell <Regina.Birdsell@leg.state.nh.us>; David Watters <David.Watters@leg.state.nh.us>
Subject: HB 231 Favorable Vote Requested

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Good Afternoon Members of the NH Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

Thank you for your service to our great state. I am a resident of Lee, NH and have lived in NH for more than 20 years.

Today I am writing to ask for your favorable vote on HB231. This bill supports the ban of declawing cats and kittens, a cruel practice. Cats in NH deserve protection from the amputation of their claws.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sheila

Sheila E. Ryan

New Hampshire SPCA

Direct Phone: 603-773-5706

Nikolas Lamos

From: Tricia Melillo
Sent: Thursday, March 30, 2023 9:30 AM
To: Nikolas Lamos
Subject: FW: Support House Bill 231

From: Sarah Hickey - Hils <shickeyhils@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, March 27, 2023 9:49 AM
To: Kevin Avard <Kevin.Avard@leg.state.nh.us>
Subject: Support House Bill 231

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Dear Chairman Avard and Members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

I am writing to express my support for House Bill 231 to prohibit the removal of claws from cats.

I support this bill because declawing cats is mutilation. It's cruel and barbaric. I have two beautiful rescue cats and I would never dream of doing anything like that to them!

Please support HB 231 when it comes before your committee on March 28. It's time to put an end to this cruel and outdated practice.

Thank you,
Sarah Hils
159 Shaker Road
Canterbury, NH
Sent from my iPhone

Nikolas Liamos

From: Kevin Avard
Sent: Thursday, March 30, 2023 9:45 AM
To: Nikolas Liamos
Subject: FW: Support HB 231 - Prohibiting Cat Declawing

From: b vegan <baerwolf@hotmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, March 25, 2023 9:42 PM
To: Kevin Avard <Kevin.Avard@leg.state.nh.us>
Subject: Support HB 231 - Prohibiting Cat Declawing

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

Support HB 231 - Prohibiting Cat Declawing

Dear Chairman Avard and Members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

Please support House Bill 231 that prohibits the removal of claws from cats when it comes before your committee on March 28.

Declawing cats may have at one time been considered a way of protecting cats and their human families from harm. Now after years of research and voluminous case studies it has been found that declawing has caused debilitating harm to cats, increased problems to families with cats, and an increase in cat nonadoptability from shelters.

It's time to put an end to this cruel and outdated practice.

Thank you
Steve Baer
baerwolf@hotmail.com

How deep into space must humans go
before they look back and realize
all the animal and human neighbors
they have killed.

Nikolas Lamos

From: linda campaignfree.org <linda@campaignfree.org>
Sent: Monday, April 3, 2023 3:35 PM
To: Nikolas Lamos
Subject: HB 231

Caution! This message was sent from outside your organization.

I am a resident and a voter in New Hampshire. I am writing in support of HB 231. Declawing cats is inhumane. It does not allow a cat any protection should it get outside or even within the home, if an unexpected dog comes with a visitor. Cats can't climb a tree or issue a warning swipe when necessary. There is no reason to do this operation and it is a serious operation, except to protect furniture. There are many better and less harmful ways to protect household items. Cats are not known to attack people unless they are severely provoked. Cats do not travel in packs and do not threaten unless they are threatened.

Please stop this cruel and unnecessary procedure. Pass HB 231.
Linda Griebisch
Portsmouth NH

Voting Sheets

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee

EXECUTIVE SESSION RECORD

2023-2024 Session

Bill # HB 231

Hearing date: 3/28/23

Executive Session date: 5/16/23

Motion of: 10L Vote: 3-2

Committee Member	Present	Made by	Second	Yes	No
Sen. Avard, Chair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sen. Pearl, Vice Chair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sen. Birdsell	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sen. Watters	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sen. Altschiller	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Motion of: _____ Vote: _____

Committee Member	Present	Made by	Second	Yes	No
Sen. Avard, Chair	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sen. Pearl, Vice Chair	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sen. Birdsell	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sen. Watters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sen. Altschiller	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Motion of: _____ Vote: _____

Committee Member	Present	Made by	Second	Yes	No
Sen. Avard, Chair	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sen. Pearl, Vice Chair	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sen. Birdsell	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sen. Watters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sen. Altschiller	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Reported out by: Pearl

Notes: _____

Committee Report

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
SENATE
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE

Tuesday, May 16, 2023

THE COMMITTEE ON Energy and Natural Resources

to which was referred **HB 231-FN**

AN ACT prohibiting the removal of claws from cats.

Having considered the same, the committee recommends that the Bill

IS INEXPEDIENT TO LEGISLATE

BY A VOTE OF: 3-2

Senator Howard Pearl
For the Committee

Nikolas Liamos 271-7875

ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

HB 231-FN, prohibiting the removal of claws from cats.

Inexpedient to Legislate, Vote 3-2.

Senator Howard Pearl for the committee.

Docket of HB231

01/09/2023	H	Introduced (in recess of) 01/05/2023 and referred to Environment and Agriculture HJ 2 P. 7
02/02/2023	H	Public Hearing: 02/07/2023 12:00 pm LOB 303
02/23/2023	H	Executive Session: 02/28/2023 01:30 pm LOB 201-203
03/06/2023	H	Committee Report: Without Recommendation 02/28/2023 (Vote ; RC) HC 15 P. 14
03/16/2023	H	Ought to Pass: MA DV 225-147 03/16/2023 HJ 9 P. 44
03/21/2023	S	Introduced 03/16/2023 and Referred to Energy and Natural Resources; SJ 11
03/22/2023	S	Hearing: 03/28/2023, Room 103, SH, 09:30 am; SC 15
05/16/2023	S	Committee Report: Inexpedient to Legislate, 05/18/2023; SC 22A
05/18/2023	S	Sen. Carson Moved Laid on Table, MA, VV; 05/18/2023; SJ 15
05/18/2023	S	Pending Motion Inexpedient to Legislate; 05/18/2023; SJ 15

Other Referrals

Senate Inventory Checklist for Archives

Bill Number: HB 231-FN

Senate Committee: ENR

Please include all documents in the order listed below and indicate the documents which have been included with an "X" beside

Final docket found on Bill Status

Bill Hearing Documents: {Legislative Aides}

Bill version as it came to the committee

All Calendar Notices

Hearing Sign-up sheet(s)

Prepared testimony, presentations, & other submissions handed in at the public hearing

Hearing Report

Revised/Amended Fiscal Notes provided by the Senate Clerk's Office

Committee Action Documents: {Legislative Aides}

All amendments considered in committee (including those not adopted):

___ - amendment # _____ ___ - amendment # _____

___ - amendment # _____ ___ - amendment # _____

Executive Session Sheet

Committee Report

Floor Action Documents: {Clerk's Office}

All floor amendments considered by the body during session (only if they are offered to the senate):

___ - amendment # _____ ___ - amendment # _____

___ - amendment # _____ ___ - amendment # _____

Post Floor Action: (if applicable) {Clerk's Office}

Committee of Conference Report (if signed off by all members. Include any new language proposed by the committee of conference):

Enrolled Bill Amendment(s)

Governor's Veto Message

All available versions of the bill: {Clerk's Office}

as amended by the senate

as amended by the house

final version

Completed Committee Report File Delivered to the Senate Clerk's Office By:

[Signature]
Committee Aide

8/2/23
Date

Senate Clerk's Office AK