

HB 445 - Animal Welfare - Declawing Cats - Prohibited Acts

SUPPORT TESTIMONY

February 15, 2020

Dear Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

Thank you for hearing testimony on this issue that is so important to shelters and rescues.

My name is Carol Oliver, I volunteer for The Feline Rescue Association and have fostered over 300 felines from newborns to seniors. Some of the saddest stories I could relay involve declawed cats and kittens, however the most personal and moving experience I have had was with my own cat Shadow. Shadow was between 8 and 9 years old when her owners decided to declaw her, then they dumped her in a shelter when her new litter box habits and behavior were unacceptable to her family. This shelter had lost its funding and Shadow would have been among the first euthanized, deemed unadoptable.

When I first met Shadow she was hiding under a blanket at that shelter fearful of the unfamiliar surroundings. Knowing that her chances of adoption were slim I immediately decided to adopt her . Her front paws were so mangled and painful that she couldn't dig in a litter box or play with the other cats. Her posture became very poor and she walked like a raccoon. After 2 years with me she finally stopped flinching when her paws were inadvertently touched. Because of her condition her posture worsened through the years. She never used a litter box. We went through countless pee pads and mopped many floors. To give her 10 more years in a loving home was worth it to her and to me. She crossed the rainbow bridge this past year at 19 years old. Had I not adopted her, my sweet, beautiful Shadow would have faced euthanizing because of a cruel act she had no control over.

No one would allow their fingers to be cut off at the first knuckle, nor would they allow their children's fingers to be cut off at the first knuckle and they wouldn't allow it to be done to their dog. Let's prevent this from happening to cats.

In addition to New York State and several cities that have banned declawing , 28 countries have outlawed this barbaric procedure. In the last few years so much legislation in Maryland has passed to protect dogs, it would be wonderful to take another step to prevent animal cruelty.

Thank you for your time and your consideration.

Carol Oliver, Volunteer

The Feline Rescue Association

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