

HB 445- Animal Welfare- Declawing Cats- Prohibited Acts
SUPPORT TESTIMONY

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

Although my official occupation is teaching nursing at one of Maryland's community colleges, my passion is animal welfare. I dedicate most of my non-working time to fostering cats and kittens, assisting in the cat room at our local Animal Services, and getting community cats trapped, neutered, vaccinated and returned to their communities.

I have read countless reports regarding declawing. The literature supports that this is a cruel practice that instead of curbing undesired behaviors, it results in a variety of physical and emotional issues. The declawed cat suffer the pain that accompanies mutilation. Many experts have compared declawing to amputating part of the fingers.

Those in cat rescue see many declawed cats being surrendered because their behavior problems increase after the procedure. These were healthy cats that happened to be engaged in "inappropriate" or "excessive" scratching. This is a common behavior that is corrected by providing cats with adequate places to engage in this natural and normal behavior.

Prohibiting declawing is essential because as long as the service is offered, misinformed cat owners can be persuaded to have their cats declawed. Efforts to educate the public on declawing's terrible effects are not enough to eliminate this practice. We must emulate communities where this practice has been outlawed. We owe this to cats in our communities.

I thank you for the opportunity to provide my testimony.

Respectfully,

Elisa Salas
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