

February 12, 2020

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve, Chair
The Honorable Dana M. Stein, Vice-Chair
House Environment & Transportation Committee
House Office Building, Room 251
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE : SUPPORT for HB 445 (PROHIBITION OF DECLAWING OF CATS)

Dear Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and Members of the Committee:

Hello, My name is Karen L. Kinnaird and I am the founder and President of Cuddles Cat Rescue, a small rescue in my hometown of Thurmont, MD. We are very much opposed to declawing. Declawing is amputation, whether performed by scalpel, clippers, or laser. We believe there is never a reason to declaw for non-therapeutic reasons (that is, unless surgery were necessary to treat animals' medical conditions). Declawing can affect cats using the litter box which they may start to urinate elsewhere. Cats can develop arthritis later on because of the way the cats walk after amputation. They can also become biters if they do not have another defense mechanism. The state of New York banned declawing in 2019. There are many alternatives to declawing a cat. Regularly trimming their nails and having scratching posts, etc. available have been proven to be the best solution.

Many Canadian provinces have prohibited declawing by the decisions of the veterinary medical associations there. Eight cities in California - Los Angeles, San Francisco, West Hollywood, Burbank, Santa Monica, Berkeley, Beverly Hills, and Culver City - plus St. Louis, MO and the City and County of Denver, CO have enacted declaw bans.

There is no reason to declaw cats to protect human health. The NIH, CDC, US Public Health Service, the Infectious Diseases Society of America, and the Canadian Medical Association, all have specifically stated that the declawing is "not advised," even for the animals of persons who are severely immunocompromised, including those with HIV. This opinion is echoed in statements on declawing published by the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) and the American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP).

Declawing is not performed in most of the rest of the world. Maryland should join the community of humane cities, states, provinces, and nations.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Karen L. Kinnaird
106 N. Church Street
Thurmont, MD 21788
Karen@kinnairdmemorials.com