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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 : IN SUPPORT OF HB 445 (PROHIBITION OF DECLAWING OF CATS)

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

I am resident of Bowie MD and I am writing this letter to support HB 445. It is amazing to me that the United States allows the declawing of cats, when this practice is barbaric and unnecessary. When we rescued our cat three (3) years, my husband who was raised with declawed cats bought the subject up of declawing our cat. I had never owned a cat before and decided to do research to see what exactly declawing is. I was horrified to realize it is not the removing of the nail but the amputation of the 1st finger digit. I informed my husband of the procedure and he was horrified as well. He agreed with me that we would never cut part of our cat's toes off just to save furniture. Again, he was raised with declawed cats but had no idea exactly what it was.

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 does not keep cats in homes, a fact acknowledged by the American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP). The state of New York banned declawing in 2019. Seven of the ten 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, Colorado have enacted declaw bans. Statistics available from those cities indicate that the relinquishment of cats to shelters in those cities, in the years since the bans were enacted, has not increased - in fact, the number of cats dumped in shelters has DECREASED consistently in the years since the laws went into effect.

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 AAHA and the American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP).

There is a reason why the following countries have banned the act of declawing:

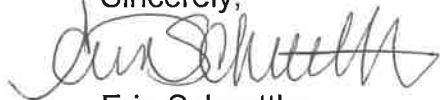
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- New Zealand
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- Montenegro
- Macedonia
- Slovenia
- France
- Germany
- Bosnia
- Malta
- Netherlands
- Northern Ireland
- Portugal
- Belgium
- Israel

Please show the United States of America and the entire world that Maryland values the quality of our cats' lives over everything else!

Sincerely,



Erin Schuettler