

February 14, 2020

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

RE: IN SUPPORT OF HB 445 (To Prohibit Declawing of Cats)

Dear Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and Members of the House Environment & Transportation Committee:

I write you in full support of HB 445 due in part to my years of experience in the veterinary care field.

My experience started in 1995, I was hired as an entry level kennel worker at a Baltimore Area full-service animal hospital. I was mentored by some of the most caring veterinary technicians and doctors in the field. After months of training in both patient care, surgical assistance, and client education, I was promoted to Veterinary Technician. My tasks included daily care of infirm patients, surgery tech assistance, and daily appointments. Our hospital also performed declawing on cats, by way of the guillotine method. It was a brutal, bloody, and blunt surgical procedure. Recovery was abysmal for kittens starting at 16 weeks of age, the surgery was also performed on senior cats, and obese cats as requested by the patient's owners. I would cringe at arriving in the next morning after a declaw surgery patient's recovery kennel. What usually greeted me was a cat screaming in pain, with blood soaked multiple layered gauze bandages. Litter, food, and excrement thrown about the kennel due to the cat responding to the painful post-operative swelling and bleeding. It was a nightmare for a technician who cared for the well-being of her patients.

Fast forward to today. 25 years later I have moved onto a different veterinary practice, my years with physical labor as a technician behind me, I am now proudly helping patients and clients as a we informed veterinary receptionist.

My current practice still performs declawing with a laser. The surgery is less bloody, but just as painful. I am able to educate clients on the newest studies about declawing, but only within limits. Declawing does not save lives, does not keep cats from shelters, and proves to only give our patients a lifetime of early-onset arthritis, behavior issues, and elimination problems.

I am fully committed, as are many of my co-workers, to see that this heinous and unnecessary procedure becomes an illegal surgery in our great State of Maryland. We are better than this, we are a State of humane residents, forging ahead with education for those who cannot voice their pain.

I urge and plead with my audience to support HB 445. We can set a historic mark for the humane care of our beloved cats. There is no place for this surgery in a forward-thinking society ensuring that so many cats, thousands this year actually, could be spared from this mutilative amputation surgery.

Thank you for your time in reading this.

Sincerely,

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