

Senate Bill 67 (Declawing Cats) – OPPOSED

January 20, 2022

Chairman Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee,

As the first cat-only veterinarian in Maryland, a past-president of both the American Association of Feline Practitioners and the Maryland Veterinary Medical Association, I have some insight into most feline health and welfare considerations. During this session I am asking the members of this Committee and entire Maryland State Legislature to **oppose SB 67** prohibiting the declawing of cats.

I understand and agree with many of the reasons SB 67's supporters oppose declawing, and I have not performed declaws in more than a decade. Most people don't even know why cats use their claws, and that it's normal behavior, not "bad" or "destructive" behavior. Even fewer know why, how, and where to provide resources for cats to use their claws safely. Thankfully, there are solutions that satisfy both normal behavior (cat's perspective) and desirable behavior (person's perspective). It just takes education, collaboration, and patience to ensure a happy and healthy home.

In the past, my position on this bill was favorable with amendments. The opportunities to discuss possible amendment parameters has occurred multiple times over the past two-plus years. Our opposition is a direct response to the advocates being completely unwilling to compromise, despite our openness to come to an agreement that works for everyone. I am open to further dialog. It just takes education, collaboration, and patience to pass meaningful and effective legislation to ensure a happy and healthy community.

Respectfully,

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