

DEFENDERS OF ANIMALS, INC.

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In Favor of House Bill House Bill H-5668

March 3, 2025

House Judiciary Committee Members
RI State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Dear House Judiciary Committee Members:

On behalf of the members and board members of Defenders of Animals, Inc., I am respectfully requesting that you vote in favor of House Bill No. 5668 by O'Brien that (Prohibits the declawing of cats by any surgical procedure to amputate or modify a portion of a cat's paw in order to remove the cat's claws and does not apply to any procedure performed for a therapeutic purpose.)

The AVMA (American Veterinary Medical Association) discourages declawing and supports non-surgical alternatives.

Compassionate veterinarians refuse to declaw cats because it violates veterinarians' oath to "do no harm."

After the surgery, the nails can grow back inside the paw, causing extreme pain.

In addition, declawing a cat removes their natural ability to climb, jump, fight, and ultimately, protect themselves.

According to experts, there are alternatives, including Behavioral Training: This is a much more effective alternative for kittens than adult cats, and involves redirecting a misbehaving cat to a toy or scratching post.

Soft Claws: These are vinyl nail caps for cat claws that are applied with surgical adhesives, which cats usually get used to within a few days. This requires a patient and dedicated owner, but it is a reasonable alternative to declawing.

Frequent Nail Trimming: This is a less effective, but nonetheless widely used alternative to declawing cats. It involves trimming the nails very short. However, this method will not stop a cat from sharpening its existing claws and using them.

Toys/Scratching Post: This might be a foregone conclusion in the eyes of some cat owners, but it is very important to have sufficient options for feline recreation and respite. Some cats are very particular, so make sure the equipment you invest in has your feline friend's seal of approval.

Synthetic facial pheromone sprays/diffusers: Consider using synthetic facial pheromone sprays and/or diffusers to help relieve anxiety or stress, which may or may not be related to your cat's scratching behavior. Apply a synthetic pheromone spray on the objects or areas in your home where your cat has exhibited undesired scratching.

Appropriate environmental enrichment: Cats are natural hunters and explorers. When we make them indoor pets, they can experience stress if not provided with an enriched environment full of outlets for their inquisitive, playful energy. An enriched environment includes providing things like scratching surfaces, toys, cat trees and more.

Very sincerely yours,

Dennis Tabella

**Dennis Tabella
Director**