

Dear Senator Roth,

My husband and I are excited to finally support SF 1935!, which would finally prohibit the unnecessary and horrible practice of declawing in Minnesota.

We have been vendors at cat shows for 18 years and sell cat scratchers. We have heard so many horrible experiences about what declawed cats, and their owners, have endured. Declawing is an amputation of the cat's toe bones. It causes a lifetime of pain. Some cats can succeed in hiding their pain - which is a survival instinct. Others cannot as they have shown blood from their paws as they try to walk. They do not use the litter box because of the pain. They tend to bite as they have lost their normal defense. A friend just recently adopted a sweet cat from the local humane society. The cat was declawed and had been previously adopted and returned as it was not using the litter box. Our friend, with much patient, succeeded in training the cat to use the box. However, the cat is now pulling her fur out with her teeth and trying to get away from the pain.

The main reason for declawing cats is that people want to save their furniture. There are many cat scratchers, besides ours, that work and are preferred by the cat instead of furniture. Some think that it is safer for their children to have a declawed cat. Not true as the cat now feels defensive and will tend to bite which is worse than a scratch. Some think that a declawed cat would protect human health. Also, not true as the NIH, CDC, US public health Service, the infectious Diseases Society of America and the Canadian Medical Association have stated that the declawing is "not advised" even for people who are immunocompromised, including those with HIV. This is also the opinion stated on declawing published by the AAHA and Feline VMA.

There is one fact that is hard to take. - The price for a declaw is from \$600 to \$1,800. It takes a vet approximately 20 minutes to do this surgery. Our vet does not declaw but there are many that still do.

Many cities throughout the United states have banned declawing. The states of New York, Maryland, and Massachusetts have banned declawing. Please help Minnesota to do the same.

Thank you!

Barbara Frye

Fancy Paw Post

Red Barn Cat Clinic, LLC

6291 North 37th Street, Richland, MI 49083

redbarncatclinic.com

To Whom It May Concern:

March 20, 2025

I am writing this letter in support of SF1935, which would prohibit the practice of declawing cats in Minnesota.

Declawing is a cruel and barbaric practice that is never in the cat's best interest. It is also not the owner's best interest, although they are unaware of this until it is too late. Declawing cats, no matter what technique is used, often causes stress and pain in these sensitive animals who not always, but many times develop behavioral or musculoskeletal problems. Behavioral problems such as house soiling, dangerous biting, and severe aggression are common and many times result in cats ending up homeless.

As a veterinarian there is not much we can do other than try to surgically repair the paws. This is difficult for the average practitioner as we are not taught this in vet school, and also costly for these people are often at their wit's end and financially drained. It can be helpful, but not a great solution to put the cat on long-term pain medicine and long-term anti-anxiety medicine, but medicating cats is notoriously difficult. It is hard to fix something that is so broken and we would like to stop our misguided colleagues from declawing to prevent the problem in the first place.

A number of feline-focused organizations are aware of these issues and are opposed to declawing cats. These include the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA), the Feline Veterinary Medical Association (FelineVMA), and the VCA (Veterinary Clinics of America) franchise. In my experience, this view is also shared by the majority of feline exclusive veterinarians, 95% of cat rescue groups, and many cat breeders as they include no-declaw clauses in their adoption contracts. Veterinary organizations, humane societies and animal shelters all over the world recognize that this is not a humane practice and have made it illegal to declaw cats in most countries and already a number of states in the USA. Yours could be the next!

Thank you for helping us, and for helping the defenseless cats who suffer silently. We appreciate that you will support the end of cat declawing, state by state, in the USA.

Sincerely,



L. Ruey Stocking, DVM
Red Barn Cat Clinic, LLC - owner

Dear Senator Roth,

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Many cities throughout the United states have banned declawing. The states of New York, Maryland, and Massachusetts have banned declawing. Please help Minnesota to do the same.

Thank you!

Barbara Frye

Fancy Paw Post



The Kitten's Cradle, LLC
P.O Box 51
Anoka, MN 55303
thekittenscradle.org
info@thekittenscradle.org

3/21/2025

Senate Committee on Agriculture, Veterans, Broadband, & Rural Development
Minnesota State Legislature

Subject: Support for SF 1935 – Minnesota Declaw Ban Bill

Dear Committee Members,

On behalf of The Kittens Cradle, we are writing to express our strong support for SF 1935, the Minnesota Anti-Declaw Bill. As an organization dedicated to the welfare of cats, we have witnessed firsthand the harmful effects of declawing, which is a cruel, invasive procedure that can cause long-term pain, behavioral issues, and unnecessary suffering.

Declawing is not a simple nail trim. It is the amputation of the last bone of each toe. Many declawed cats experience chronic pain, lameness, and increased likelihood of behavioral problems, which often lead to surrender or abandonment to organizations like ours. Humane alternatives, such as scratching posts, nail caps, and regular trimming, are widely available and effective.

Minnesota has an opportunity to join the growing number of states and municipalities that have taken a stand against this cruel and unnecessary procedure. We urge the committee to support SF 1935 and advance this important legislation to protect cats across our state.

Thank you for your time and consideration. The Kittens Cradle is happy to serve as a resource in discussions about humane alternatives and responsible pet care.

Sincerely,

Tracey Moneta, Julie Jensen, and Tonya Wilson
Board of Directors
The Kittens Cradle
info@thekittenscradle.org
(763) 350-9871

Dear Senator Roth,

My husband and I are excited to finally support SF 1935!, which would finally prohibit the unnecessary and horrible practice of declawing in Minnesota.

We have been vendors at cat shows for 18 years and sell cat scratchers. We have heard so many horrible experiences about what declawed cats, and their owners, have endured. Declawing is an amputation of the cat's toe bones. It causes a lifetime of pain. Some cats can succeed in hiding their pain - which is a survival instinct. Others cannot as they have shown blood from their paws as they try to walk. They do not use the litter box because of the pain. They tend to bite as they have lost their normal defense. A friend just recently adopted a sweet cat from the local humane society. The cat was declawed and had been previously adopted and returned as it was not using the litter box. Our friend, with much patient, succeeded in training the cat to use the box. However, the cat is now pulling her fur out with her teeth and trying to get away from the pain.

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Thank you!

Barbara Frye

Fancy Paw Post



DR. SARAH A WEST
DVM, DACVR
sarah@west-rad.com

228 FORTY NINER DR.
SIERRA CITY, CA
96125

March 20, 2025

Re: Minnesota Anti-Declaw Bill SF 1935 — SUPPORT

As a licensed veterinarian in California and Washington, as well The Paw Project Director of Veterinary Radiology of North America and The Paw Project Co-Director of Northern California, I would like to voice my strong support for SF 1935.

Declawing is a misnomer and not simply the removal of a cat's visible claws. Looking at your own nails, the equivalent procedure would remove your fingernails by cutting each of your fingertips off at the last knuckle. It is an inhumane procedure that permanently disfigures and has no benefit for the cat. In fact, it sets up lifelong pain and can lead to behavioral issues that result in higher chances of abandonment or early death from euthanasia.

As a board-certified veterinary radiologist, I have been tasked with evaluating countless x-rays on cats that were brought to their primary care veterinarian for complications related to declawing. These complications include but are not limited to orthopedic pain and lameness, abnormal vocalization, unprovoked aggression like biting, and urinating or defecating outside the litter box. X-rays often reveal bone shards left behind during the toe amputations. These cats are forced to bear weight directly on the bone fragments for the rest of their lives (the equivalent of a lifetime of walking with pebbles in the bottom of both shoes). The declawed cats bear weight abnormally and the biomechanical shift leads to imbalance in other areas of their bodies. Resultant arthritis and spinal disease can be severe. Swelling and infection at the site of amputation can be severe. Infection that spreads may lead to more extensive amputations. Whatever the form declawing takes, it is a debilitating procedure.

Declawing a cat will not protect the immunosuppressed, elderly or disabled. Preventing cat scratches in this vulnerable population is the main defense proponents of declawing give to defend the procedure. They claim that declawing protects this population while in truth, it has been shown that declawing increases a cat's propensity to bite. With the number and nature of bacteria inside a cat's mouth, a bite wound is much more dangerous than a scratch would ever be.



DR. SARAH A WEST
DVM, DACVR
sarah@west-rad.com

228 FORTY NINER DR.
SIERRA CITY, CA
96125

I truly believe that I am part of an amazing profession. I am very proud of so much of what we do as veterinarians. But I am saddened that in the USA we have not yet found our way to follow in the footsteps of so many developed countries in the world that have permanently banned elective declawing. It appalls me that some of my colleagues and our veterinary medical associations continue to condone and defend declawing on disproven claims rather than own up to the fact that it is unnecessary, exceedingly cruel and will not keep cats in homes. Unfortunately, this reticence means it falls to people outside veterinary medicine to make the right decision. Please support the Minnesota Anti-Declaw Bill- SF 1935 and give Minnesota cats a better future.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Sarah A. West-Kubly, DVM, DACVR, EMT
West Radiologic Services, Proprietor
510-681-8886
westrad@att.net

DIPLOMATE





Advocates for Animals • A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

March 12, 2025

Minnesota State Senate Agriculture, Veterans, Broadband, and Rural Development Committee

RE: IN SUPPORT OF SF 1935 (prohibiting the declawing of cats)

Dear Chair Putnam, Vice Chair Kupec, and Committee members:

Thank you for considering SF 1935, an important animal protection bill, which will prohibit the inhumane and unnecessary practice of declawing in Minnesota. The Paw Project is an international nonprofit, veterinarian-run organization based in California, that has worked for over 25 years to end declawing. We are proud to support this bill. Declawing is a series of amputations of all or most of the last bone of each of an animal's toes and performed to prevent unwanted scratching. Declawing removes an integral part of an animal's anatomy and subjects animals to the risks of pain, infection, behavioral changes, and lifelong lameness. Safe and effective alternatives to declawing include simple training, nail caps, and other established deterrent methods. We urge you to vote YES on this bill.

Declawing has been common in the US, but it is illegal or considered unethical by veterinarians in most countries. The Paw Project drafted nation's first statewide declaw ban New York in July 2019. Maryland banned declawing in 2022, as did Massachusetts in 2024. There have been anti-declaw bills introduced in NJ, PA, IA, AZ, WA, CA, RI, and IL in 2025, so far. In recent years, public opinion regarding declawing has evolved due to educational campaigns and published evidence exposing the harmful effects of declawing. Eight cities in California, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Burbank, Santa Monica, Berkeley, Beverly Hills, West Hollywood, and Culver City, have prohibited declawing. Denver (CO), Austin (TX), Madison (WI), Allentown (PA), Pittsburgh (PA), Tacoma (WA), Evanston (IL) and St. Louis (MO) are some of the other US cities to have banned declawing. In the past few years, declawing has been prohibited in nine of ten Canadian provinces.

The Feline Veterinary Medical Association (FelineVMA) forbids its certified Cat Friendly practices from performing declaw surgery. FelineVMA states, "There is no current peer-reviewed data definitively proving that cats with destructive behavior are more likely to be euthanized, abandoned, or relinquished. The decision (by veterinarians) of whether or not to declaw should not be impacted by these considerations." VCA and Banfield Hospitals, which operate many veterinary clinics, will not perform "below standard of care" declaw procedures.

Much evidence exists that behavioral changes following declawing can result in the relinquishment of animals to shelters. The CDC and NIH advise pet owners to "not declaw" their animals since declawing is not an effective means of preventing opportunistic disease in immunocompromised individuals.

In 2018 and 2024, peer-reviewed scientific articles in the *Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery* reported the harmful effects of declawing, stating that "declawing increases the risk of long-term or persistent pain, manifesting as unwanted behaviors such as inappropriate elimination (soiling/urinating outside of the litter box) and aggression/biting. This is not only detrimental to the cat (pain is a major welfare issue and these behaviors are common reasons for relinquishment of cats to shelters), but also has health implications for their human companions, as cat bites can be serious."

We proudly support this bill, which will greatly protect animals and will end declawing in Minnesota.

Sincerely yours,

Jennifer Conrad, DVM, Founder and Director, Paw Project

Dear MN Senate Committee on Agriculture, Veterans, Broadband, and Rural Development,

My name is Joey Lusvardi. I am an IAABC Certified Cat Behavior Consultant, a Minnesota licensed physician assistant, and a resident of Minneapolis. I am writing to share my full support and endorsement as a feline behavior professional of SF 1935, the ban on nontherapeutic declawing of cats.

I work with people to help them solve cat behavior problems including destructive scratching of furniture and aggressive behaviors. Declawing a cat is something I would never recommend to a client to solve these behavior concerns because it negatively impacts not only the cat, but the humans. I often work with clients whose cats are declawed that have worsened aggressive behaviors and house soiling following the declawing. This creates significant distress for the humans and can be very challenging to solve, often requiring significant collaboration between myself and their veterinarian to address the problem.

Declawing has acceptable alternatives that are humane and much more effective without the behavioral risks that can follow a cat being declawed. People can modify their environment, increase the amount of mental stimulation the cat gets, and keep their cat's claws clipped.

From the standpoint of a licensed medical professional who also has an expertise in cat behavior (I lead a weird life!), declawing a cat for human health reasons presents greater risk to the humans than keeping the claws intact. I would go so far to say that it would be malpractice of a medical professional to suggest declawing. My view is in line with the recommendation against declawing for human health reasons from numerous human medical organizations including the NIH, CDC, US Public Health Service, the Infectious Diseases Society of America, and the Canadian Medical Association.

The only time declawing is acceptable is when a licensed veterinarian determines that the health of the cat may potentially be compromised without the procedure. Thankfully, SF 1935 allows an exemption for this while still protecting the cats, and ultimately the humans, of Minnesota.

I hope to hear that this bill is moved forward and that Minnesota will join the growing list of states that bans this unnecessary and harmful practice.

Sincerely,

Joey Lusvardi

Hugh Chisholm, DVM

222 Silver Birch Drive
Hubley, NS, Canada, B3Z 1L2
hughchisholm@me.com

March 15, 2025

Senator Aric Putnam and Members of the Agriculture, Veterans, Broadband, and Rural Development Committee

Dear Senator Putnam and Committee Members,

I support SF 1935, which would prohibit the unnecessary and harmful practice of declawing in Minnesota.

Although I am currently retired, I had a lengthy career as Nova Scotia's first feline-only veterinarian. I was instrumental in lobbying the Nova Scotia Veterinary Medical Association and the Nova Scotia Provincial Government to ban the declawing of cats in our province. We were the first province in Canada to ban the procedure. It has since been banned in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Quebec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland & Labrador.

Peer-reviewed scientific studies have shown that declawing is a painful procedure that can have lifelong implications for the cat. To be honest, it's a cruel, barbaric mutilation.

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 FelineVMA.

We haven't seen an increase in cats being surrendered to shelters in Nova Scotia since our ban was enacted in March 2018. Cat owners quickly learned to adapt to the

change. In fact, most people were horrified when they learned that declawing involves amputation of the last bone along with the claw on each digit!

I respectfully request you support this important measure.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H Chisholm, DVM". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the letters "H" and "C" being particularly prominent.

Hugh Chisholm, BSc, DipEd, DVM (retired)
Paw Project Director for Atlantic Canada



Susan V. Whittred, D.V.M.
34 Hamilton Avenue
Oyster Bay, New York 11771
Phone: 516-922-2287
www.theladewcatsanctuary.org

March 20, 2025

Re: Veterinary Support of Minnesota Anti-Declaw Bill SF 1935

To Whom It May concern,

As a New York veterinarian actively practicing in shelter medicine specifically for cats, I strongly support SF1935, to prohibit the declawing of cats in Minnesota.

As executive director and veterinarian of the Patricia H. Ladew Foundation, Inc., I can tell you from experience that declawed cats are not guaranteed a home. Prior to the declaw ban in New York State, we had a no-declaw clause in our contract because, in our experience, cats that have been declawed more often than not lose their homes because of inappropriate urination and/or biting. We recently rescued a 14-year-old, four-paw declawed cat who lost his home due to aggression and was in danger of being euthanized at a city shelter. Upon intake, this cat had bones left behind from a declaw on all of his toes (imagine walking on pebbles in your shoes). The inflammation and pain that was caused by declawing is simply inhumane. This cat's story is not isolated, it occurs in 63% of cats that have been declawed.

The cat had to undergo paw revision surgery to alleviate some of the pain caused by the original declaw — and he was one of the lucky ones. Many owners would not be able to afford the surgery to alleviate some of the damage.

Cats naturally use their claws to assist in climbing and maintaining balance, to help them stretch and exercise, and to escape danger. Cats are commonly declawed in an attempt to protect furniture from unwanted scratching. Occasionally, animals are declawed in a misinformed attempt to protect human health, despite the CDC's and NIH's advice to "not declaw" to prevent opportunistic disease in immunocompromised individuals. There are safe and effective means to manage undesirable scratching behaviors through simple training and other established

methods. My own immune-compromised mother lived to be 100 years old with clawed cats all of her life.

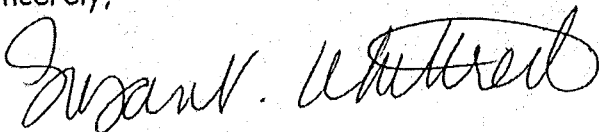
In my 21 years of practice I can tell you that there was only one instance where a client thought he had to declaw his cat due to a health issue. All the rest (and mostly these were kittens) were to protect furniture and most of those were "in case the cat scratches the furniture." At the shelter, it was not uncommon to learn that the adopter had already decided to declaw the kitten before they even picked out the kitten because declawing was something that "they just always did to their cats."

Declawing is much worse than the removal of claws, it is the amputation of all or most of the last bone of each of the toes of the animal's feet. The American Veterinary Medical Association lists "anesthetic complications (including death), hemorrhage, infection and pain" as potential complications of declawing. Chronic pain syndromes, permanent lameness, and behavior changes have been described in the veterinary scientific literature as complications of declawing.

Declawing is unnecessary and inhumane. As a shelter veterinarian, I am thrilled that it is already banned in my great state of New York, Maryland and multiple US cities, including Los Angeles and San Francisco. In many countries, including in the United Kingdom, Austria, Switzerland, and Sweden, declawing is illegal, or is considered unethical by established professional veterinary organizations. Veterinarians in Canada have recently voted to ban the procedure in 7 provinces. I urge the state of Minnesota to join in the humane effort.

When the bill is passed, it will stop the injustices that have been caused by veterinarians to cats for the last 50 years. It is time to stop surgically amputating cats and causing life-long pain to suit the needs of humans and their couches. I hope you and your colleagues will vote to approve this bill as written so that cats can live as cats.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Susan V. Whittred". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a large initial 'S' and a prominent 'W'.

Susan V. Whittred, DVM
Executive Director



Formerly called the Humane
Society of the United States

Humane Veterinary Medical Alliance

1255 23rd St. NW, Suite 450
Washington, DC 20037
202-452-1100

humaneworld.org/HumaneVMA

March 20, 2025

Senator Aric Putnam, Chair
Senator Robert J. Kupec, Vice Chair
Members of the MN Senate Agriculture, Veterans, Broadband, and Rural Development Committee
2219 Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: VETERINARY SUPPORT for SF 1935 (Mohamed), Cats; elective declawing of cats prohibited

Dear Chair Putnam, Vice Chair Kupec, and Members of the Minnesota Senate Agriculture, Veterans, Broadband, and Rural Development Committee:

On behalf of the Humane Veterinary Medical Alliance (HumaneVMA), we are writing today to encourage your support for SF 1935, a bill that would prohibit non-therapeutic (for cosmetic and convenience purposes) feline declawing in Minnesota.

HumaneVMA believes that the declawing of cats—unless medically necessary to treat a physical illness, injury, or disease—is inhumane. The veterinary community has seen the serious negative effects of declawing, while examining and treating cats suffering from the aftereffects of this surgery. In light of this evidence and our professional experience, we support legislation to end nontherapeutic cat declawing.

Research has repeatedly indicated not only a high post-op complication rate of 50%, but an increased likelihood of declawed cats avoiding the litter box, and biting—which means that declawed cats pose a greater risk to human health and safety. Tragically, these are the primary behavioral reasons why cats are relinquished to shelters, where many face euthanasia.

Scratching is a normal feline behavior. It removes dead husks from cats' claws, marks territory, and stretches muscles. Where scratching may be a problem, HumaneVMA advocates for the use of sensible and humane alternatives such as scratching posts, alternative furniture selection or placement, nail trims, nail caps and training.

We join Humane World for Animals (formerly the Humane Society of the United States), the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) and FelineVMA (formerly the American Association of Feline Practitioners) in strongly opposing convenience declawing.



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Declawing is already prohibited in dozens of countries worldwide and in more than a dozen U.S. cities, including Evanston, IL; Austin, TX; Denver, CO; Madison, WI; Pittsburgh, PA; St. Louis, MO; and Los Angeles, San Francisco, Santa Monica, Berkeley, Beverly Hills, Burbank, Culver City and West Hollywood, CA. Furthermore, New York, Maryland, Virginia, and Massachusetts have all passed statewide declawing bans.

We strongly encourage you to take a humane leadership stance and support this legislation—SF 1935—safeguarding the health and welfare of cats in Minnesota.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Deinard", written in a cursive style.

Amos Deinard, DVM, PhD

**Minnesota State Representative
Humane Veterinary Medical Alliance (HumaneVMA)**

P.S. The following two pages of this letter contain a joint HumaneVMA/Humane World for Animals statement in opposition to the declawing of cats, signed by 23 Minnesota veterinary professionals.



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Humane Veterinary Medical Alliance

1255 23rd St. NW, Suite 450
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humaneworld.org/HumaneVMA

Veterinary Statement of Opposition to Cat Declawing

We, the undersigned veterinary professionals, believe that the declawing (onychectomy, tendonectomy) of cats—unless medically necessary to treat a physical illness, injury, or disease—is inhumane. The veterinary community has seen the serious negative effects of declawing, while examining and treating cats suffering from the sequelae of this surgery. In light of the evidence and our professional experience, we support legislation to end the nontherapeutic declawing of cats.

Contrary to popular belief, declawing is not simply a removal of nails. Declawing is a painful, invasive surgery—a series of 10-18 separate amputations of the last bones of a cat's toes. It is typically performed for convenience and to avoid possible damage to household items. However, declawing exposes the patient to the risks of anesthesia, infection, and blood loss as well as longer-term chronic pain, nerve damage and lameness.

Research has repeatedly indicated not only a high post-operative complication rate of 50%, but an increased likelihood of declawed cats avoiding the litter box, and biting—which means that declawed cats pose a greater risk to human health and safety. Tragically, these are the primary behavioral reasons why cats are relinquished to shelters, where many face euthanasia. A prominent 2017 study in the *Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery* found that 63% of declawed cats had painful bone fragments remaining after surgery. This led to further exacerbation of permanent side effects, including back pain and litter box avoidance.

Scratching is a normal feline behavior. It removes dead husks from cats' claws, marks territory, and stretches muscles. Where scratching may be a problem, HumaneVMA advocates for the use of humane alternatives. These are better not only for the cats' health, but also for cat owners who are often unaware of the common, frustrating, expensive, and potentially dangerous consequences of this misguided procedure. Sensible alternatives include well-chosen scratching posts, alternative furniture selection or placement, nail trims, nail caps and training.

We join the Humane Veterinary Medical Alliance (HumaneVMA), the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) and the American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) in strongly opposing convenience declawing. Declawing has already been prohibited in dozens of countries worldwide and in more than a dozen U.S. cities—including Evanston, IL; Austin, TX; Denver, CO; Madison, WI; Pittsburgh, PA; St. Louis, MO; and Los Angeles, San Francisco, Santa Monica, Berkeley, Beverly Hills, Burbank, Culver City and West Hollywood, CA. Furthermore, New York, Maryland, Virginia, and Massachusetts have all passed statewide declawing bans.

We strongly encourage legislators to take a humane leadership stance and enact laws to ensure that elective declawing of cats is prohibited.



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Society of the United States

Humane Veterinary Medical Alliance

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Signed by the following 23 Minnesota veterinary professionals in opposition to feline declawing:

Dr.	Amos	Deinard	Veterinarian	Minneapolis
Dr.	Alan	Olander	Veterinarian	Nevis
Miss	Riahnna	Mazariegos	Veterinary Student	Saint Paul
Dr.	Jerri	Smith	Veterinarian	Saint Paul
Dr.	Shari	Christenson	Veterinarian	Rochester
Ms.	Alana	Gage	Veterinary Student	St Paul
Dr.	Travis	Manley	Veterinarian	Eagan
Ms.	Mary Jo	Crooks	Veterinary Technician (former)	Centerville
Dr.	Kristin	Lammi	Veterinarian	Minneapolis
Ms.	Dawn	Perault	Veterinary Technician	St. Paul
Dr.	Veronica	Bartsch	Veterinarian	Minneapolis
Dr.	Samantha	Gardner	Veterinarian	Golden Valley
Miss	Whitney	Smith	Veterinary Student	Minneapolis
Dr.	Hannah	Curtis	Veterinarian	Plymouth
Dr.	Ronald	Gaskin	Veterinarian	Shakopee
Ms.	Rose	Hegerle	Veterinary Technician	Saint Cloud
Ms.	Ruth	Murman	Veterinary Technician	Minnetonka
Dr.	Nellie	Hangge	Veterinarian	St. Paul
Dr.	Jennifer	Uden	Veterinarian	Eagan
Miss	Bretton	Fobes	Veterinary Technician	Minneapolis
Mrs.	Jacqueline	Vargas	Veterinarian	Benson
Dr.	Sandra	Koch	Veterinarian	Vadnais Heights
Ms.	Erin	McCarthy	Veterinary Technician	Eden Prairie

Dr. Nicole Martell-Moran

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In Support of Bill SF 1935

March 18, 2025

Dear Senate Committee Members,

I am writing in support of bill SF 1935 to ban declawing of cats in Minnesota. I am a feline specialist veterinarian with a special interest in the after-effects of declawing on cats. I have spent the last several years collecting data on behavioral changes and pain assessment in these cats and am very concerned about the continuation of this surgery. I see chronic pain, akin to reported effects on human amputee patients and behavioral changes that put both the cat's and their owner's health at risk. Declawed cats exhibit increased biting behavior. This can be due to chronic pain and/or the absence of scratching as a first defense. Cat bites are known to be at high risk for developing infection whereas scratches are not.

The completed study is attached and has been published in the Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery. The data show declawed cats have a 3 times higher odds for developing back pain, 7 times higher odds of inappropriate elimination habits, a 4.5 times higher odds of increased biting behavior and 3 times higher odds of barbering. Cats that had a piece of the bone left behind (63% of the cats in this study) at the time of the surgery had a 9 times higher odds of being aggressive. Several of these after-effects are common reasons for relinquishment to shelters. Cats can be trained and nails can be trimmed or capped. There is no medical need for this surgery and it is my sincere hope that you will sign the bill to set the precedent for the rest of the veterinary community and ban declawing.

Sincerely,
Nicole Martell-Moran, DVM, MPH, DABVP(Feline)

To whom it may concern:

I support SF 1935, which would prohibit the unnecessary and harmful practice of declawing in Minnesota. I have been a veterinarian for 44 years and am still a passionate practicing integrative medicine veterinarian. Our profession has evolved to become aware of the long-term harm this multiple digit amputation causes. We take an oath to "DO NO HARM". In my opinion, it will become malpractice to continue performing this procedure with the current knowledge of chronic pain documented with studies.

Declawing is amputation, whether performed by scalpel, clippers, or laser. I 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 Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) and the Feline Veterinary Medical Association (FelineVMA).

The states of New York, Maryland, and Massachusetts have banned declawing. Eight cities in California - Los Angeles, San Francisco, West Hollywood, Burbank, Santa Monica, Berkeley, Beverly Hills, and Culver City - and many other US cities, including Denver, St. Louis, Austin, Pittsburgh, Evanston, Pittsburgh, and Madison, have enacted declaw bans. Statistics available from the cities where declawing is banned 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. They are all in agreement that declawed cats, having lost the ability to use their claws for protection, are more inclined to bite. Cat bites are significantly higher risk than scratches are. These organizations favor education of cat behavior. Rental agreements have also changed opinion once they are educated that cats are more likely to develop long-term behavior issues such as litter box avoidance due to chronic pain. This opinion is echoed in statements on declawing published by the AAHA and FelineVMA. I have personally educated the public in exam rooms and veterinary conferences about the chronic neuropathic pain endured that is not unlike phantom pain that human amputees experience. Cats are stoic, and often do not manifest their pain in ways we can understand. Others become aggressive, change personalities, develop incontinence issues, and develop arthritis from compensating for the loss of vital toe bones to walk on.

Please be on the right side of history and humanely support SF 1935.

Sincerely,

3/20/25

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