
HOUSE BILL 1904

State of Washington

69th Legislature

2025 Regular Session

By Representatives Peterson, Leavitt, Parshley, Fosse, and Macri

Read first time 02/10/25. Referred to Committee on Health Care & Wellness.

1 AN ACT Relating to prohibiting the act of declawing cats; adding
2 a new section to chapter 18.92 RCW; and prescribing penalties.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 18.92
5 RCW to read as follows:

6 (1) It is unlawful for any person engaged in the practice of
7 veterinary medicine to perform a declawing procedure on a cat, unless
8 necessary for a therapeutic purpose.

9 (2) A veterinarian who performs a declawing procedure on a cat
10 shall keep a record of the procedure for a period of four years after
11 the last contact with the cat. The record must be subject to audit by
12 the board. The record must include the name and address of the cat's
13 owner, the name and address of the person from whom payment is
14 received for the procedure, and a description of the cat including,
15 but not limited to:

16 (a) The cat's name, breed, date of birth, sex, color, markings,
17 and current weight;

18 (b) The date and time of the procedure;

19 (c) The reason the procedure was performed; and

20 (d) Any diagnostic opinion, analysis, or test result to support
21 the diagnosis.

1 (3) (a) Any person who performs a declawing procedure on a cat
2 shall report the number of performed procedures to the board annually
3 no later than March 30th each year. The board shall maintain all
4 notices received under this subsection for four years from the date
5 of receipt.

6 (b) Records maintained under this subsection may not be publicly
7 disseminated and are not considered public records as defined in RCW
8 40.14.010.

9 (4) (a) Any person who performs a declawing procedure on a cat
10 within the state of Washington in violation of this section shall be
11 subject to a fine of not more than:

12 (i) \$1,000 for a first offense;

13 (ii) \$1,500 for a second offense; and

14 (iii) \$2,500 for a third or subsequent offense.

15 (b) A veterinarian licensed under this chapter who violates any
16 provision of this section may be subject to disciplinary action by
17 the board.

18 (5) This section preempts any ordinance regulating the practice
19 of declawing a cat enacted by a county, city, town, or other
20 political subdivision of this state.

21 (6) For the purposes of this section, the following definitions
22 apply:

23 (a) "Cat" means any domesticated species of the family *Felidae*
24 and does not include any wild or nonnative species of the family
25 *Felidae*.

26 (b) (i) "Declawing procedure" means:

27 (A) An onychectomy, a dactylectomy, a phalangectomy, or any other
28 procedure that removes a portion of the paw or digit of a cat in
29 order to remove a claw;

30 (B) A tendonectomy or any other procedure that cuts or modifies
31 the tendon of the limb, paw, or digit of a cat in order to prohibit
32 the normal movement of a claw; or

33 (C) Any procedure that prevents the normal functioning of one or
34 more claws of a cat.

35 (ii) "Declawing procedure" does not include nail filing, nail
36 trimming, or the placement of temporary nail caps on one or more
37 claws of a cat.

38 (c) (i) "Therapeutic purpose" means any action intended to address
39 as a matter of medical necessity an existing or recurring infection,

1 disease, injury, or abnormal condition in the claw, nail bed, or toe
2 bone that jeopardizes the afflicted animal's health.

3 (ii) "Therapeutic purpose" does not include any action performed
4 for cosmetic or aesthetic reasons or reasons of convenience in the
5 keeping or handling of an animal.

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