

## **Ending Declaw Advocacy Toolkit**

A toolkit for passing local ordinances



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY  
OF THE UNITED STATES**



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# Introduction

**SCRATCHING IS A NORMAL BEHAVIOR** for cats. Sometimes they scratch our couches, shower curtains, dining room chairs or even us! Unfortunately, not all owners have patience for cats who scratch, and some owners aren't aware of the alternatives that exist to curb this behavior. Some turn to their veterinarian and ask for their cat to be declawed, believing the procedure removes only the claws. This is not the case, and declawing does much more harm than good. Declawing, better described as de-knuckling, is a harmful and unnecessary amputation procedure that can cause chronic pain and behavior problems in its recipients. If humans were to receive a similar surgery, it would be like amputating our fingers at the first knuckle. Cats who are declawed are more prone to biting, since they may be in pain, are frustrated and cannot use their claws as defense. Cat bites, when serious and left untreated, can cause infection. It is not uncommon for someone to be hospitalized while recovering from a cat bite. Declawing can lead to chronic pain and discomfort in the cat, as well as back pain and arthritis because removing the toe bones changes a cat's stance and gait.

**“Declawing, better described as de-knuckling, has no place in ethical veterinary care.”**

—DR. JENNIFER CONRAD, DVM, FOUNDER AND  
DIRECTOR OF THE PAW PROJECT

Thankfully, an increasing number of veterinarians and animal hospitals have realized that declawing isn't just a medical procedure but is considered animal cruelty. They no longer offer the procedure to clients unless it's deemed medically necessary for the cat (such as to remove a tumor on a cat's toe). The attitude toward declawing has changed radically over the past few decades, led in large part by compassionate veterinarians and the veterinarian-led Paw Project. However, cats can't wait for the profession to end declawing on its own—laws are needed.

Declawing is prohibited or considered unethical in most countries, including Sweden, Brazil, Germany, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and most of the European Union. In 2019, New York became the first U.S. state to ban declawing, and Maryland followed in 2022. Declaw bans have also been enacted locally in more than 15 counties and cities in the United States. Citizens and cat lovers far and wide are engaging in their local communities to be the voice for our feline friends, and you can join them!

## **Who is this toolkit for?**

This toolkit is for “catvocates” (cat advocates), cat lovers and anyone who cares about the welfare of cats. If you're interested in stopping the

declawing of cats but don't know where to start, this toolkit is perfect for you. Whether you have experience working on legislative issues or not, we will help you feel empowered to make a change in your community through simple step-by-step actions and explanations about the process of banning the cruel practice of declawing where you live.

This toolkit will discuss why passing anti-declaw legislation is important and how to start the conversation about banning declaw in your city/county/state. We'll cover the basics, bill language, common arguments and more.



## Why is anti-declaw legislation important?

We will end cat declawing through a combination of cultural change and legislation. By raising awareness among cat owners that declawing is cruel and exposing them to the many humane alternatives, we will decrease the demand. Peer-to-peer influence is changing attitudes in the veterinary field, and newer generations of veterinary professionals lean strongly against declawing. This in turn lends support for laws prohibiting declawing. These laws then signal that declawing is inhumane and unethical, further codifying the cultural change. It's all connected.

State-level declaw bans have the greatest impact. Passing a state law successfully depends on many factors, such as sponsorship and support from legislators, coalition strength, community support and more. It can be a long process and take multiple legislative sessions to succeed. A local ordinance may be easier to pass and can be a good starting point to build support for a statewide effort. Multiple local bans can signal to state legislators that a state ban is important. We recommend reading this guide and deciding at the end whether you want to work on passing a state law or start with a local ordinance, but a majority of this toolkit will focus on passing a local ordinance. Just remember, the Humane Society of the United States is here to guide you during the entire process! Whether it's at the state or local level, legislation that protects cats from being declawed is beneficial for many different reasons. Here are some key benefits:

- Anti-declaw legislation helps cats.
  - Declaw procedures are painful and take away a cat's ability to exhibit natural behaviors.
  - Often, declawed cats experience chronic pain and behavior issues such as biting or avoiding the litter box.
- Anti-declaw legislation helps shelter and rescue organizations.
  - Declawed cats who bite or don't use the litter box properly may have a higher chance of being relinquished to a shelter. These behaviors can make it more difficult to find that cat a new home.
- Anti-declaw legislation helps human health.
  - Cat bites carry a dangerously high infection risk to healthy and immunocompromised people alike.
  - One in three patients with cat bites needs to be hospitalized, with two-thirds of those requiring surgical treatment such as stitches.

### Not the right time for legislation? That's OK!

It won't always be possible to pass legislation in your community, maybe because the political climate isn't ideal or there are other factors at play, and certain states have passed preemption laws

preventing local bans from happening. Raising awareness is still something you can do as an advocate! Start with friends and family. Having conversations and informing the people around you about the harm of declawing is a good first step. You can also do things such as sharing posts about declawing on social media. [The Paw Project](#), the leading non-profit organization solely dedicated to ending cat declawing, and the HSUS have sharegraphics, blog posts and other shareable content you can use, found in the Appendix of this toolkit. You can also look up other animal protection groups in your area and talk with them about their views on declawing. Perhaps they're interested in working together on passing legislation in the future, or maybe they are already planning something. See the section below on creating buzz for more actions you can take.

### How to use this toolkit

After you've read all the facts and background materials and decide to join the fight, contact us! Here at the HSUS, we love to work with local advocates. If you want to lead the charge to ban declawing in your town, we can help provide you with supporting materials, pointers on how to talk with your elected officials, connect you with other advocates and more. With more states and cities interested in banning declawing, it's possible we're already working within your community! For state-level action, we want to make sure everyone is working together. You can find contact information below. We can't wait to hear from you!



### How to contact us:

- The HSUS End Cat Declawing Campaign: [CompanionAnimals@hsus.org](mailto:CompanionAnimals@hsus.org)
- Find your HSUS State Director [here](#).
- The Paw Project: [Info@thepawproject.org](mailto:Info@thepawproject.org)

# Step by step: How do we get legislation passed?

## Research and learn the issue!

Before advocating publicly, it's important to get as familiar with the issue as possible. We've included some fact sheets, talking points, model language and graphics in the appendix that will help you learn more about ending declawing and become comfortable discussing it. The more you learn and talk about ending declawing, the more confident you'll feel as you continue to advocate for its end.

The Paw Project produced a [documentary about declawing, The Paw Project Movie](#), which you can watch for free on Amazon Prime. The Paw Project website also has a wealth of information on why declawing should be avoided.

## Research declawing in your community

It can help to understand how prevalent declawing is in your community, especially if you are working to pass a local ban. Find out which veterinary clinics do and do not perform declaw surgery. Compile a list of clinics in your area and call them to ask if they offer declaw surgeries. Take notes on which say yes or no, or if they need more information.

The following veterinarians and clinics do not perform medically unnecessary declaw surgery:

- [Veterinarians on the Paw Project's list](#)
- [Fear Free Certified@clinics](#)
- [Cat Friendly certified clinics](#)
- [Banfield Pet Hospitals@](#)
- [VCA Animal Hospitals](#)
- [BluePearl Pet Hospitals](#)

## Veterinary stakeholders

The veterinary community is a major stakeholder in the battle to end declawing. Veterinary professionals serve as both the advocates and the opposition. In most cases, opposition comes from the veterinary medical association at the state level. It seems odd that a group of veterinarians would oppose a bill to help cats, right? Well, it's a bit complicated. It helps to know who's who when preparing to launch legislation to ban declawing.

- State veterinary medical associations are membership organizations established at the state and sometimes regional level to promote and protect the state's veterinary industry. Think

of them as industry trade organizations often focused on the business side of the profession. Not all veterinarians belong to a state VMA, although these organizations often imply they speak for the entire profession when advocating for or against policies that impact animals. State VMAs often oppose any policy that they view as taking a decision away from a veterinarian and their client, such as a declaw ban. These trade groups would prefer the profession be self-regulated and especially do not want to be regulated by non-veterinarians. The state VMAs worry that if we begin banning procedures that they perform regularly, they will soon no longer be allowed to perform other procedures. Declawing, though, is an unnecessary procedure and is usually done for the benefit of the owner and not the cat. Opposition may also come from those who worry that other common procedures similar to declawing, such as tail docking, ear cropping and devocalization, will be next.

- Each state has a veterinary medical board, which is the government agency responsible for issuing veterinary licenses, investigating complaints and setting policies on the practice of veterinary medicine within the state. The state veterinary board has oversight of veterinarians, veterinary technicians and veterinary clinics.
- Veterinarians are directly impacted by a declaw ban as this is a surgery they may regularly be performing, and a ban has the potential to change the way their practice is run. Individual veterinarians may have different opinions on the topic.
- The Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association is a national professional veterinary medical association with a focus on animal welfare. HSVMA is the veterinary affiliate of the HSUS and works closely with the HSUS to oppose declawing and enact declaw bans. HSVMA is a valuable resource to engage the veterinary voice in efforts to ban declawing and has a team of volunteer HSVMA state representatives who can engage in these efforts at the state level.
  - Read HSVMA's [policy statement on cosmetic and convenience procedures in companion animals](#).
  - If you are looking to engage your local veterinary community, HSVMA has [state HSVMA representatives in most states](#).
  - The HSVMA also has a letter of support for anti-declaw legislation available for veterinary professionals to sign. Check that out [here](#).

## Animal welfare stakeholders

- The Paw Project, the Humane Society of the United States and other organizations.
  - Both the Paw Project and the HSUS are national nonprofit organizations dedicated to improving animal welfare. Either may already be supporting ongoing efforts to ban declaw in your city or state. Research and reach out to these organizations directly to find out.

- The [HSUS](#), the nation’s most effective animal welfare organization, works to end the cruelest practices toward all animals. The HSUS has been working closely with the Paw Project to ban nontherapeutic declawing.
  - Read the HSUS’s [Why declawing is bad for your cat](#).
  - Reach out to your [state or regional HSUS director](#) to inquire and learn about existing campaigns near you.
  - Contact the HSUS: [Companionanimals@humanesociety.org](mailto:Companionanimals@humanesociety.org)
- The Paw Project has been dedicated exclusively to the issue of ending nontherapeutic declawing procedures for over two decades. It engages with veterinarians, legislators and the public. The Paw Project has achieved multiple successes, including writing and leading the support effort for the first local, county, provincial and statewide declaw bans in North America. You can read more about its work on its website: [The Paw Project - Cat Paws Need Their Claws](#)
  - Contact the Paw Project: [Info@pawproject.org](mailto:Info@pawproject.org)

Read below for more tips on gathering community and stakeholder support.

### Coalition building and getting buy-in

Now that you know who the stakeholders are, assemble your coalition! Before enacting any legislation, it’s best to have a coalition of groups or individuals in your community who support this issue and are available to lend their resources or expertise. When meeting with your coalition, find out what resources are available between the group, what responsibilities each person will take on, and what your strategy is for passing legislation.

Not sure who to include in your coalition? Here are some ideas:

- Your local shelters, rescues and animal care organizations are a great place to start.
  - Shelter professionals have a strong stake in passing anti-declaw legislation since they often see firsthand the downsides of declawing. The negative behaviors often caused by declawing—biting and inappropriate litter box use—put declawed cats at risk of being surrendered to a shelter, which increases their chances of being euthanized. Shelter professionals also often speak regularly with the public about animal care issues such as declawing and likely include a provision in their adoption contracts prohibiting declawing. Chances are they have experience working with declawed cats and may be willing to share their stories. Reach out to the executive director or someone in a leadership position to discuss declawing.
  - If the conversation goes well, ask them if they would be willing to meet with elected officials, raise awareness about declawing on social media, provide testimony if your future bill gets a hearing or advocate for a declawing ban in other ways. At the very least, ask if they’re willing to list their name

and organization on the [sign-on letter for shelter professionals](#). This sign-on letter, when presented to lawmakers, shows that a ban has strong support from local shelters or animal care services. Even if a facility does not want to participate in a hearing, signing the letter is a simple way it can show support for a ban.

- Your local animal control agency may be assigned to enforce a declaw ban, so getting its buy-in is helpful. It’s good for the agency to be aware of your efforts and on board with that responsibility. Local veterinary support is also vital. This is where your research into declawing in your community will come in handy.

Remember, this topic can be sensitive in the veterinarian community, even among veterinarians who don’t declaw, as they may be hesitant to support legislation regulating veterinary practices. Don’t be discouraged if a vet doesn’t want to get involved with legislation, even if they are opposed to declawing.

The Humane Society Veterinarian Medical Association representative for your state is a good contact to make when first starting out. The Paw Project also has representatives across the country who can lend their expertise. These reps may be able to point you in the direction of other veterinarians who are willing to support your efforts. Once you contact us about your interest in pursuing a declaw ban, we’ll get everyone connected.

In addition, check out the Paw Project’s [directory of no-declaw veterinarians](#) to see if any are located in your area.

- Veterinarians and veterinary technicians may not have the bandwidth to be active on the coalition but could take other steps to support a ban. HVSMA offers a sign-on letter for veterinary professionals to sign to show their support. If you find veterinarians, vet techs or those who work in the profession who are willing to sign the letter, you can ask them to sign [here](#).
- Don’t forget to include veterinarians and veterinary technicians who work on mobile or spay/neuter clinics; with horses, large animals or exotics; or in other settings. A veterinarian is a veterinarian, and any vet who will sign the anti-declaw statement or write a letter of support is helpful!
- Human doctors and nurses can also be an asset to your coalition. Inevitably, a proponent of declawing will claim the procedure is needed to prevent people, particularly the elderly and immunocompromised, from being scratched. However, we know that declawed cats are more likely to bite, which is a far worse injury than a scratch. Human medical professionals can help set the record straight.
- To grow a movement, you will want to bring in other people like yourself who are passionate about ending declawing. Having the support of more people will allow you to have a larger reach and will help convince lawmakers that something needs to be



done. While you are networking with shelters and veterinarians, connect with local advocates who are willing to stand with you or, better yet, help you out. You can ask friends or family if they are willing to work together with you while you champion this issue. If you volunteer at a shelter, that's a great place to connect with other animal advocates. Consider sharing a post on social media asking acquaintances if they would be interested in working with you. Most people care about the welfare of cats, and many people like to get involved in their community but may not know how!

Once you identify your coalition, be sure to collect everyone's contact information so you can arrange a meeting or a call with all the parties involved. Having an agenda will help keep the meeting on track. See our appendix below for an example of how to run a kickoff meeting with your coalition.

### **Gathering community support and creating a buzz!**

Now that you've got a strong coalition, let's talk about creating a buzz in your community! Most of your neighbors probably aren't thinking about declawing or the need to end the practice. You need to get the conversation started so that lawmakers see that this is something their constituents are interested in. Here are some ideas to help get you started, with examples included in our appendices:

- Letters to the editor are simple but highly effective ways to get the attention of legislators in your community. They can also help get people talking about the issue.
- Op-eds, which are opinion pieces that typically appear on a page opposite a newspaper's editorial page, can be a great tool to educate the public about the issue of declawing, especially if authored by a veterinarian who works in your community.
- Sharegraphics are simple, eye-catching ways to alert friends and others on social media about declawing, especially if there's a bill to talk about! The best part is that they're very easy to share once created.
- Pass out flyers and have conversations with potential allies at community events, such as adoption fairs and other animal-themed activities. Include an action such as calling or emailing lawmakers or signing a petition in support of the declaw ban.
- Ask local businesses to support the ban. Pet supply stores, grooming salons and pet-sitting services are good options. But don't limit yourself—ask any potentially cat-friendly business to add their name to your list of supporters.
- Get creative! Consider writing a blog post about why declawing is harmful. Not into writing? Maybe interview a veterinarian who doesn't declaw and ask if you can share your conversation on social media.



## **WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES TO DECLAWING?**

- Cats prefer to scratch tall, sturdy objects that allow them to dig their nails in and get a good grip. That's why cats tend to scratch furniture. Most cats prefer (even more than furniture!) a scratching post that's at least 32" tall, will not wobble when scratched and made of a type of rope called sisal. object.
- Near the objects you don't want scratched, offer sturdy scratching posts and boards made from different materials like carpet, sisal, wood and cardboard. Try both vertical posts and horizontal or angled boards to learn your cat's preference. Use toys and catnip or honeysuckle spray to entice your cat to use the posts and boards.
- Steer clear of cheap vertical posts with a lightweight base. If a post is wobbly or topples over when your cat uses it, they'll never use it again.
- Anytime you see your cat scratching the posts or boards you've set out, reinforce the good behavior with praise or a treat.
- Keep your cat's claws trimmed with cat clippers (not human nail clippers.)
- Ask your veterinarian about soft plastic caps glued to your cat's nails.

## Getting media attention

Banning declawing is a great topic for local media. Once your ban is introduced, reach out to your local television and print news outlets to pitch a story about the campaign. Find tips on how to contact the media here.

Some things to consider including in your pitch:

- Basic facts about what declawing is and why it's not good for cats
- Details about the bill to ban declawing, including who the sponsor is, a bill number and what stage it is at in the process
- Stories about individual cats who were harmed by declawing. These can be from cat owners, veterinarians or animal shelter staff
- Quotes from local veterinarians, animal shelters or other local experts
- A call to action, if applicable. Leaving readers with an action they can take can help rally support.
- Keep any interested reporter updated on developments with the bill, such as if a hearing or vote is scheduled.

## Getting a local declaw ban introduced

While you're working on creating that buzz, start developing strategy for a declaw ban bill. You'll need to familiarize yourself with the legislative process in your locality, identify animal-friendly lawmakers and start lobbying to get the bill introduced.

### The process

Your local government most likely has a website that will tell you a lot about your city council or county commission, including who the members are, how to contact them and when and where they meet. Attending council meetings and reading over agendas can help you understand the process. In general, a council member will introduce a bill at a hearing, then a public hearing will be set where people can testify for or against the measure, and finally a vote will be taken. The vote may happen the same day as the hearing, or it may happen at a later date. Depending on the makeup of your city or county council, the bill may be heard by a committee, which will then decide if the bill goes to the full council for a vote or not. If the bill passes, it likely needs to be signed off on by the mayor before becoming law.

### How to find a sponsor

- The first step to getting a bill introduced is finding a sponsor, ideally someone who believes in the cause and will champion the effort. There may be a council member well known as animal-friendly who you could approach, or you can start with the person who represents the area where you live. If you are not familiar with your city council, ask your coalition members if they have a good relationship with any of the members.



**“A lot of people aren’t aware that declawing a cat is actually a really cruel and mutilating surgery. It’s not just doing a little manicure, but actually removes the first knuckle, the first bone from their paw.”**

—MARYLAND SENATOR CHERYL KAGAN (D-MONTGOMERY COUNTY)

- Once you decide who to start with, call their office and begin a conversation about declawing. Ask for a meeting with their staff so you can introduce yourself and state your case.
- When you're at the meeting, start with the facts. A lot of people aren't aware that declawing isn't just removing a cat's claws. When the meeting ends, let them know that they can contact you for additional information.
- If they are extremely interested, consider asking if they would introduce legislation about banning declawing. If not, regroup and identify the next council member to approach.
- If they agree to sponsor a bill about declawing, consider it a successful first step on this journey! There's still much to be done, and it's important to stay engaged with the sponsor throughout the entire process. Communicate regularly with the sponsor as the bill gets introduced, scheduled for a hearing and voted on.
- It's important to make the connection that declawing is animal cruelty. Many lawmakers, regardless of party affiliation, don't like to imagine that animal cruelty is occurring in their communities and would agree that protecting animals is an important bipartisan issue. **Tip:** If attending the meeting in person, bring a fact sheet or talking points for their office. If you're meeting virtually, send them via email prior to the meeting. If you're asked any questions you don't know the answers to, take note and let them know you will follow up with answers. It's OK if you don't have all the answers right away!

## Language

Provide your sponsor with the recommended declaw ban language provided in Appendix 5. The sponsor will need to work with council staff to draft a bill based on the sample language—request to review the bill draft before it is introduced. If you haven't already, it's important to reach out to the HSUS or the Paw Project at this stage so we can review the language of the bill as well. When crafting laws, it's vital to exclude any potential loopholes. Loopholes may be inadvertently created in bill drafting or they may be explicit. For example, sometimes it is suggested to lawmakers to include an exemption for human health, such as if an elderly person with thin skin wanted to have their cat declawed to prevent them from being scratched, a veterinarian could be permitted to do so. The HSUS and the Paw Project **do not support** these types of exemptions, and their position is supported by statements from human health authorities, including Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health.

The recommended declaw ban language prohibits nontherapeutic declawing but does allow for it when there is a medical condition in the cat's paw. Declawing is not allowed for convenience in keeping or handling the cat, or to ensure a cat can stay in a home.

## Lining up co-sponsors and votes

Adding co-sponsors to the bill demonstrates that it has support. Ask the bill sponsor to solicit co-sponsors or suggest who you should engage about signing on. Tip for state bills: Having bipartisan sponsorship of your bill could be very helpful for its longevity. It's not always necessary, but it does show that animal issues are bipartisan issues.

Once the bill is introduced, you should plan to meet with other council members. This is something you can divide up among coalition members or do in groups that include, if possible, someone from the district that council member represents. Follow the steps above for meeting with potential sponsors. It's a good idea to leave each council member with a fact sheet explaining what declawing is, as anti-declaw bills can be confusing to many people unfamiliar with cat anatomy or cat behavior. Links to fact sheets can be found in Appendix 7.

If possible, try to get a commitment from the other committee members or council members to vote yes on the ban. If you don't get a commitment, you'll want to follow up with any additional information that may sway their vote. You'll also want to generate calls to their office, particularly from constituents, asking for support for the ban. Keep track of who is voting for the ban; who has stated their opposition; and for those who are undecided or noncommittal, which way they are leaning before the vote.

## Attend hearings and testify in support

If your bill gets a hearing, it's important to show up to support it! Once you know the date and time, let your coalition and other supporters know. Encourage them to show up to support the bill. If you are part of a larger coalition, make sure anyone willing to provide testimony is registered ahead of time (if required), including yourself.

There are two ways to provide testimony: written and oral. You usually don't have to choose one or the other, so you can do both.

Written testimony can provide detailed arguments for the bill with statistics and quotes from scientific studies, stories about declawed cats and other background information as attachments. Written testimony is a great option for those who can't attend the hearing in person, such as veterinarians with busy schedules. Community members can also submit simple written testimony just stating their support for the bill. You'll need to know where to send written testimony and share that information with your coalition and supporters.

Oral testimony should cover the main points. Oral testimony is often limited, with each speaker getting two or three minutes. Be sure to find out the time limits prior to the hearing. It helps to practice your testimony so you can get in all your points in the time allotted. Time can go by quickly!

Below are some tips on providing strong testimony at a hearing:

- Coordinate ahead of time with your coalition. It's likely that your coalition includes a diverse array of occupations. Divide up key points so supporters are speaking to their strengths.
  - If you have representation from the sheltering community, ask them to speak on their experiences with declawed cats; these could include receiving declawed cats from owners relinquishing them for specific reasons or trying to adopt out declawed cats who have trouble using the litter box.
  - Has anyone in your coalition owned a declawed cat? Perhaps they were bitten or struggled with vet bills due to rehabilitation for the cat after they were declawed. Having them share their experience will have an emotional impact.
  - Include veterinarians and veterinary technicians! This one is crucial. Because the issue of declawing does involve veterinary medical professionals, you'll want representation from the side that supports a declaw ban. Veterinarians or veterinary technicians should discuss the harmful effects that declawing has on cats, immediately after surgery and for the rest of their lives.
  - If you have any medical doctors with human patients in your coalition, they can speak to the implications that cat bites have on human health.
  - If you have a lot of supporters at an in-person hearing, instead of having everyone testify individually, during your



testimony, ask everyone in support to stand up.

- Overall, it's important to drive home to your audience the main message of declawing being harmful for cats and human health. Try not to repeat information that has already been brought up by someone else in your coalition; it goes a long way to be as succinct and brief as possible while still delivering your message.

### **Anticipate opposition and/or criticism**

Often, there is time reserved for questions after you present your oral testimony. If a committee member or legislator has concerns or questions, they may ask you a few questions. You can find a list of the most commonly used arguments against anti-declawing bills in our appendix. Studying this list, as well as knowing the issue thoroughly, will help you prepare for these questions. If you are stumped by a question, take a breath. Let whoever is asking know that you would like to get back to them with the most accurate answer, or indicate if there is someone else in the audience who may be able to answer the question. It's best not to lie or fake your way through an answer because this could weaken your credibility.

In some cases, lawmakers may only address their questions to the sponsor. This means it is important that you prepare the sponsor with all the talking points. It is also important that the sponsor doesn't accept amendments to the bill that may seem reasonable on the surface but in reality would create loopholes large enough to negate

any protections for cats. You'll need to have this conversation with your sponsor ahead of time.

### **The vote: celebrate or regroup**

Not all hearings end with an immediate vote, so be sure to follow your bill until it does receive a vote. And keep following it until it completes all the steps needed to become law.

### **You've won!**

Congratulations! You've secured a win and, more importantly, have helped cats in your state. You deserve to celebrate. Before you do, it's a good idea to thank your sponsors or legislators who helped with passage of your bill. You can thank them publicly on social platforms, or you can write a letter. You can also share the good news via social media. Consider the idea of a sharegraphic—we've included a few templates in the appendix.

### **Regroup**

If your bill did not pass, that's OK! Look back on how far it did come and consider that time as an educational opportunity. Get together with your coalition for a post-hearing debrief. You can use that time to discuss what went well and what you would like to change if you decide to keep working on this issue. Not many bills are passed the first session they are introduced.

### **State declaw bans**

This toolkit has mostly focused on passing bans at a local level, but this section will focus on working at the state level. Passing declaw bans at the state level is a heavier lift than the local ordinances. That means more advocates are needed to build the support required.

If you want to work toward a statewide ban, contact the HSUS via your [HSUS State Director](#) or through the Paw Project! We are actively working on banning declawing in a number of states. If you live in one of these states, we want you to join our efforts! If you live in a state without active legislation, it's likely we're having conversations, and coalitions may just be forming. We need you for those states, too!

We love working with advocates and will help you throughout the entire process!

Email us at [CompanionAnimals@humanesociety.org](mailto:CompanionAnimals@humanesociety.org)

or contact the Paw Project at [Info@thepawproject.org](mailto:Info@thepawproject.org)

# Appendix

## Sample letters to the editor

Letters to the editor (LTEs) are an effective way to get the attention of the public and of legislators. Brief (generally shorter than 300 words), but powerful, LTEs should focus on educating the reader and end with a call to action—something to motivate readers to take action in the bill’s favor. Before submitting, check the word limits. Publications have different word limits for LTEs they choose to publish. Here are some examples.

### Example 1

*Our state of [state] needs to protect cats. Currently, it is legal to declaw a cat at the owner’s request. Declawing involves amputating the last digits of a cat’s front paws. It is not simply removing the claw as its name suggests. In a human, this would be like a doctor cutting off your fingertips at the top knuckle. We wouldn’t be able to do anything! How is it then safe for the same to happen to a cat, an animal who relies on her claws to perform the most basic of functions, such as using a litter box or stretching or scratching to mark territory? Right now, our state has the opportunity to protect cats from this terrible procedure. [Bill #] would prohibit veterinarians from performing declaw surgeries on cats unless there was a medical necessity for the cat herself, and not for the owner’s benefit. [State] could follow behind Maryland and New York as states that protect and values the safety of our beloved feline companions. I encourage anyone reading this to take action and ask our legislators to support this bill. It only takes a few minutes but makes an impact on thousands of cats.*

- [Here’s](#) an article on how to write an effective LTE.



### Example 2

*My cat’s claws were amputated by a vet. Yes, you read that correctly. His actual digits were cut off. The crazy thing is that this procedure, called declawing, was perfectly legal for his previous owner to have done. And it’s not considered animal cruelty, despite the serious pain it causes him on a daily basis, even years after the procedure. Veterinarians in [state where declawing is legal] can perform declawing at the owner’s request for reasons as lame as “the cat is destroying my furniture” or “he might scratch my elderly parent.” I find it irresponsible that any vet would agree to perform this procedure for any reason other than benefiting the cat. Otherwise, this amputation, as I prefer to call it, is harmful. I can tell that my declawed cat isn’t comfortable doing normal cat things, such as making biscuits or using the litter box. How ridiculous is that? Despite being mistreated by his last owner, he’s still a happy guy who makes the best of his situation. Maybe one day this state will become more humane and pass a law prohibiting the chopping off of cat toes. Until then, I’ll be taking my cat to a vet practice that protects cats, not harms them. Fellow cat owners, I suggest you do the same.*

# Appendix

## Sample op-eds

An op-ed, which stands for opposite the editorial page, is extremely effective in educating the public. These pieces are longer than LTEs (about 800 to 1,200 words) and are chosen by the editor of the publication. They are usually very popular with readers because they showcase strong opinions, usually about something happening in the area. Keep these points in mind when writing an op-ed:

- Start strong; you want to hook your readers right away and keep them reading.
- Include facts to support your opinion.
- Relate your argument to the everyday reader: Why should they care?
- Leave them with a call to action: What can they do about it?

Here is a sample of a published op-ed written by an HSUS staff member:

*For a long time, Americans considered declawing a routine option to prevent unwanted scratching, and many think it's just a simple surgery. However, the truth is this antiquated procedure is invasive, cruel and can cause both behavioral and medical issues for cats. Maryland's law prohibiting the practice has just gone into effect, and it's a good time for Virginians who care about cats to consider the merits of a similar prohibition.*

*Declawing is not simply a nail trim. This surgery involves the amputation of the last bone of each toe of the front paws. If performed on a human being, it would be like cutting off each finger at the top knuckle. People often seek out a declaw procedure to prevent their cat from scratching. However, scratching is a natural behavior for cats. They scratch for a number of reasons: to remove the dead husks from their claws, to mark territory, and even to stretch their muscles!*

*Contrary to widespread belief, declawing does not provide any benefit for the cat—often, it's the exact opposite. One in five cats has long-term complications from declaw surgery, and 50% have immediate post-surgical complications. Medical complications can include pain in the paw, infection, tissue necrosis (tissue death), lameness and back pain. Removing claws changes the way a cat's foot meets the ground and can also cause pain similar to wearing an uncomfortable pair of shoes. There can also be a regrowth of improperly removed claws, nerve damage and bone spurs.*

*Nor does declawing guarantee a cat will remain in his or her home. According to research published in the *Journal of Feline Medicine and Surgery* in 2018, declaw surgery in cats was associated with a*

*significant increase in the odds of developing adverse behaviors, including biting, barbering, aggression and inappropriate elimination. These are some of the most common reasons for the relinquishment of cats to shelters. Moreover, both the American Association of Feline Practitioners and the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association assert that the likelihood that a cat may be euthanized, abandoned or relinquished should not be the basis of a decision to declaw and that declawing "is not considered to be a justifiable alternative to relinquishment."*

*Declawing is also unnecessary to protect human health. The National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Infectious Diseases Society of America jointly stated that declawing is "not advised" to protect the health of even severely immunocompromised patients, including those with HIV. In fact, declawing may be more dangerous due to the documented increased biting behavior of declawed cats.*

*There are a number of humane, noninvasive ways to deal with unwanted scratching. Keeping cat claws trimmed, providing a variety of stable scratching posts and boards, as well as using plastic nail caps are all great alternatives to unnecessary surgery. Declawing should be reserved only for those rare cases in which a cat has a medical problem that would warrant such surgery, such as a tumor or infection in the nail bed. It can no longer be treated as an option for the convenience of the cat owner, and Virginia would do well to join New York and Maryland in taking this stand.*



# Appendix

## Sample sharegraphics

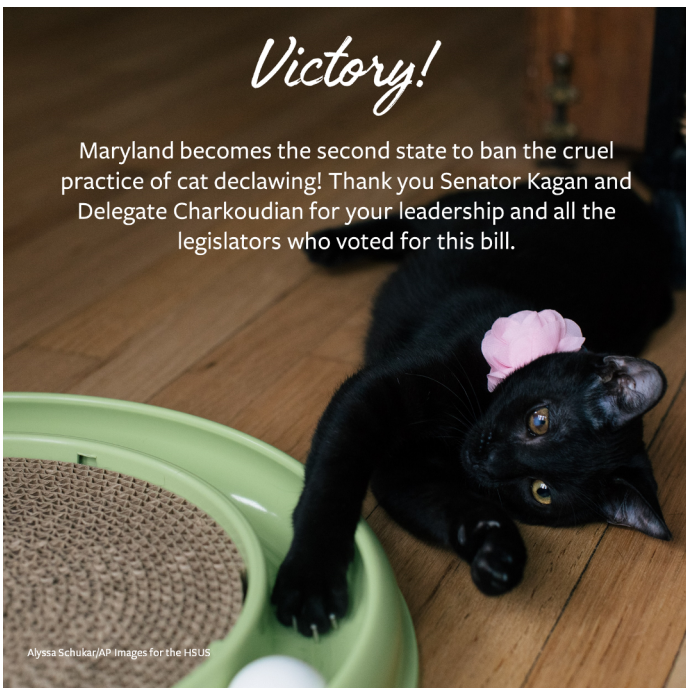
- PowerPoint is your best friend when creating sharegraphics! Check out some of our examples below for inspiration! All you need are cute, eye-catching pictures, bright colors to catch attention and a strong call to action!



### Keep claws on the paws!

Legislation to ban the cruel practice of declawing cats has passed the Senate and will be debated on the House floor this week! Contact your Delegates and urge them to support HB22 with no weakening amendments!

Alyssa Schukar/AP Images for the HSUS



# Appendix

## Sample testimony

When writing your testimony, be sure to do the following:

- Properly address the committee chairperson or legislator you are speaking to. You can usually find who this person is ahead of time when your bill is placed on the agenda. If not, all members present usually introduce themselves at the start of the meeting.
- Include important details only. Unless you are telling a story to have emotional impact, it's best to stick with facts that support your bill.
- Be respectful of any time limits for oral testimony. If you go over the time allotted, you may be cut off, and the remainder of your testimony will not be heard.

### Sample testimony

**Address your audience appropriately and thank them for their time.**

*“Hello (President, Representative, Senator, Councilperson, etc.), thank you for the opportunity to address you today about cat declawing/BILL#”*

**Introduce yourself and the relevance for your testimony.**

*“My name is X, and I am a (vet tech, advocate, veterinarian, owner of a declawed cat, etc.)”*

**If you have a compelling story about working with or owning a declawed cat, this can be extremely effective! Be sure to center your story around the implications of the cat being declawed.**

**You can then include some facts that are relevant to your argument supporting a ban on declawing. Here are some facts about declawing you can use in your testimony:**

- *Declawing is a medical procedure with serious implications that involves the amputation of the last bone of each toe. If performed on a human being, it would be equivalent to cutting off each finger (and toe) at the last knuckle. It is an unnecessary surgery, most often performed to address convenience issues such as problem scratching of household furniture, and it provides no medical benefit whatsoever to the cat.*
- *Declawing of cats is not fully condoned by any veterinary medical association. A multitude of veterinarians across [State] and the country refuse to perform this procedure on ethical grounds, citing that it is an invasive convenience surgery. In the last few years both the American Animal Hospital Association and*

*American Association of Feline Practitioners strengthened their position statements against declawing, with the AAHA now asserting that it “strongly opposes the declawing of domestic cats.” The Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association opposes any surgical procedure—including declawing—done solely for the convenience of the caregiver and yielding no medical benefit to the companion animal.*

- *This surgery can be extremely painful and may lead to lifelong health risks and complications, including behavioral abnormalities such as litter box aversion and increased biting. These conditions often lead to owner surrender of declawed cats and place financial burdens on already-strained shelters and, often, the taxpayer.*

**Be sure to keep your testimony concise, and be mindful of the time limits. Before wrapping up, thank your audience once more for the chance to speak.**





# Appendix

## Model language

### **An Act to Prohibit Cat Declawing**

SECTION 1. Section XXXX is added to the XXXX Code, to read:

(a) For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

- (1) “Cat” means an animal of the taxonomic family Felidae.
- (2) “Declawing” means an onychectomy or any other surgical procedure to amputate or modify a portion of a cat’s paw in order to remove the cat’s claws.
- (3) “Tendonectomy” means a procedure in which the tendons to a cat’s limbs, paws, or toes are cut or modified so that the normal functioning of the claws is impaired.
- (4) “Therapeutic purpose” means a medically necessary procedure to address an existing or recurring infection, disease, injury, or abnormal condition in the claws, nail bed, or toe bone, that jeopardizes the cat’s health. “Therapeutic purpose” does not include a procedure performed for a cosmetic or aesthetic purpose or to make the cat more convenient to keep or handle.

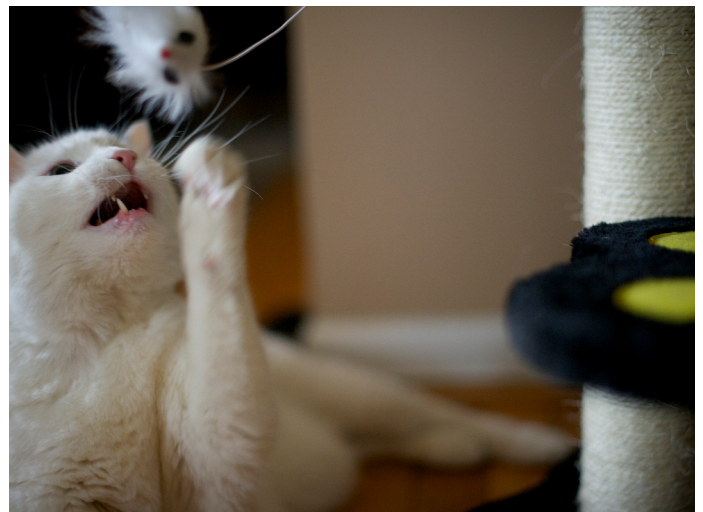
(b) (1) A person shall not perform surgical claw removal, declawing, or a tendonectomy on any cat or otherwise alter a cat’s toes, claws, or paws to prevent or impair the normal function of the cat’s toes, claws, or paws.

(2) This subdivision does not apply to a procedure performed solely for a therapeutic purpose.

(c) A violation of this section shall be subject to a civil penalty of five hundred dollars (\$500) for the first violation, one thousand dollars (\$1,000) for the second violation, and two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500) for the third and any subsequent violation.

### **Drafting notes**

- Prohibitions on elective declawing are most appropriately placed in the section of law addressing cruelty to animals. Avoid attaching a declaw ban to the state’s veterinary practice act, if possible, although that may be the best option for strategic reasons.
- A broad definition of cat includes domestic cats, wild and exotic cats that may be held in private ownership, and hybrids such as Savannah Cats.
- Bill should clearly ban non-therapeutic (elective) declawing while allowing medically necessary procedures that remove portions of the toes to treat tumors, infections, injuries and deformities of the claw, nail bed or toe. We do not support exemptions for “human health” or in cases where the cat may otherwise be rehomed if not declawed.
- Penalty amount should be sufficient to be a deterrent.
- There should be reasonable expectation of enforcing violations.



# Appendix

## Talking points

### What is declawing?

- Declawing is the amputation of the last bone of each toe on a cat's paw. It would be like cutting off your fingers at the last knuckles. It is also called onychectomy.
- Declawing of the front paws is most common procedure, though declawing all four paws also occurs.
- The standard method of declawing is amputating with a scalpel or guillotine clipper—the same tool commonly used to trim a dog's nails.
- The wounds are closed with stitches or surgical glue, and the feet are bandaged.
- Another declaw method is laser surgery, in which a small, intense beam of light cuts through tissue by heating and vaporizing it. Both methods can cause lasting physical problems for the cat.

### What is a tendonectomy?

- During a tendonectomy, the tendon that controls the claw in each toe is severed.
- The cat retains their claws but can't control them or extend them to scratch.
- This procedure is associated with a high incidence of abnormally thick claw growth.
- As a result, more frequent and challenging nail trims are required to prevent the cat's claws from snagging on people, carpet, furniture and drapes, or from growing into the cat's paw pads.
- Because of complications, a cat who has been tendonectomized may require declawing later. Although a tendonectomy is not actually amputation, a 1998 study published in the *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association* found the incidence of bleeding, lameness and infection was similar between tendonectomy and declawing.

**Declawing is no trip to the spa for a mani-pedi. It involves amputating the last part of a cat's 10 front toes—and some surgeries also involve the back toes.**

- A comparison in humans would be cutting off a person's fingers and toes at the last joints.
- One in five cats have long-term complications from declaw surgery (50% experience immediate post-surgical complications). One-third of declawed cats manifest behavioral problems after declawing.
- The veterinary community is increasingly opposed to declawing. The American Association of Feline Practitioners, the American Animal Hospital Association, the Canadian Veterinary Medical Association and the Humane Society Veterinary Medical

Association are all opposed. The largest veterinary hospital systems in the U.S.—VCA, Banfield, and Blue Pearl—will not perform elective declaw procedures on cats.

**Scratching is a natural behavior for cats. This removes the dead husks from their claws, marks territory—both visually and with scent glands on their paws—and stretches their muscles.**

**Scratching is important for a cat's physical and mental well-being.**

- Declawing is not done for the benefit of the cat, as it prevents the cat from performing natural feline behaviors.
- What is natural scratching behavior for a cat is often considered misbehavior by humans, especially when furniture or other household objects are damaged in the process.

**We can't continue to wait for the veterinary profession to stop declawing on its own. Declawing is still too commonly practiced, and cat owners are often not made aware of its high risk of permanent adverse effects or its controversies.**

- In 2019, New York became the first U.S. state to ban declawing. Maryland banned declawing in 2022. Washington, D.C. banned declawing in 2023. Declawing is also banned in the cities of Los Angeles, San Francisco, Denver, St. Louis and Pittsburgh, among others. Countries and regions that have restricted declawing include Australia, Brazil, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and much of the European Union, where the European Convention for the Protection of Pet Animals prohibits the procedure.
- Many viable alternatives to declawing exist, from regular nail trims to nail caps and behavior modification and training. Cat owners also have numerous options in furniture selection, placement and protection that do not physically or behaviorally harm the cat.

### Where is declawing banned in the United States?

- States:
  - New York (2019)
  - Maryland (2022)
  - District of Columbia (2022)
- Cities/counties:
  - Los Angeles, San Francisco, Santa Monica, Berkeley, Beverly Hills, Burbank, Culver City and West Hollywood, California
  - Denver, Colorado
  - Austin, Texas
  - St. Louis (city), St. Louis County, Missouri
  - Pittsburgh, Allentown, Easton, Etna, Pennsylvania
  - Madison, Wisconsin
  - Volusia County, Florida

# Talking points cont.

## **Why should declawing (and tendonectomy) practices be banned?**

- Declawing can cause nerve damage, phantom pain, pain from retained bone fragments, infection or tissue necrosis (tissue death).
- Improperly removed claws can regrow, causing nerve damage and bone spurs. Additional corrective surgery may alleviate some of the pain.
- Declawing can also cause back pain and lameness and contribute to arthritis. Removing claws changes the way a cat's paws meet the ground and can cause pain similar to wearing an uncomfortable pair of shoes. This can lead to chronic issues with joints and arthritis.
- Declawing can lead to pain-related behavior issues such as biting and avoiding the litter box. These behaviors increase the risk of the cat being evicted from the home.
- For several days after surgery, shredded newspaper is typically used in the litter box to prevent litter from irritating declawed paws. This unfamiliar litter substitute, accompanied by pain when scratching in the box, may lead
- cats to stop using the litter box. Litter box avoidance can become a chronic problem for declawed cats.

For these reasons and more, a growing number of veterinary groups oppose declawing.

## **Where do veterinarians stand on declawing and declaw bans?**

- The American Association of Feline Practitioners [strongly opposes declawing](#).
- [Banfield](#) Pet Hospital, Blue Pearl Pet Hospital and [VCA](#) Animal Hospital—all large veterinary clinic chains—do not support or perform declawing.
- [International Cat Care](#) and International Society of Feline Medicine consider declawing an act of mutilation and unethical.
- The American Animal Hospital Association [strongly opposes](#) declawing.
- The American Veterinary Medical Association [discourages](#) declawing of cats.
- The Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association [strongly opposes declawing](#).

## **Isn't declawing necessary to protect people from cat scratches?**

- Infectious disease specialists do not recommend declawing. The National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Infectious Diseases Society of America jointly state that declawing is “not advised” to protect the health of even severely immune-compromised patients, including those with HIV.
- No longer able to defend themselves with their claws, cats may resort to biting. Declawed cats have been documented to bite more frequently. Cat bites carry a dangerously high infection risk to healthy and immunocompromised people alike, often requiring

hospitalization. Thus, declawing a cat puts people at a higher risk of injury than if the cat were not declawed.

- Handling cats properly, understanding how to avoid being scratched, and claw trimming can reduce the risk of injury from scratches.

## **Won't people relinquish their cats for scratching if declawing is prohibited?**

- Concerns that more cats would be surrendered to shelters if declawing is banned are unfounded. There is no data to support that cats with destructive behaviors are more likely to be euthanized, abandoned or relinquished.
- A study of British Columbia shelters in the year before and after a province-wide declaw ban was enacted shows no impact on either shelter intake of cats or on cat euthanasia. Examination of available intake data for shelters in the cities where declaw bans have been enacted also shows no negative impact of declaw bans on shelter cat intake/euthanasia.
- Declawing is no guarantee that a cat will remain in the home, as declawed cats are frequently relinquished to animal shelters and rescue groups. Declawing is not a justifiable alternative to relinquishment or rehoming.
- Most people love their cats; when provided with information, services and resources on how to humanely deal with misplaced scratching behavior, they will choose to keep their pets. It is incumbent upon the veterinary profession and the animal welfare community to ensure that cat owners have access to these helpful resources. Otherwise, they may become frustrated and take unnecessary steps such as relinquishment.

## **Why do cats scratch things in the first place?**

- Scratching is normal cat behavior; it helps cats stretch, remove dead husks from their claws and add their scent to their surroundings.
- In the wild, cats use their claws to catch prey, defend themselves and escape from predators.
- At home, that translates to behaviors such as attacking toys and climbing to favorite perches.
- Because they have scent glands on their paws, scratching is also a way of scent-marking their territory, which helps them feel at home and secure.
- Cats will scratch on furniture and rugs when they are not provided with more acceptable alternatives.

## **Instead of declawing, how can you prevent your cat from scratching furniture?**

- Give your cat acceptable alternative items to scratch.
- Use positive reinforcement training to teach your cat where they can scratch.

## Talking points cont.

- Place multiple scratching posts around your home and near the furniture you don't want scratched.
- Offer tall, sturdy and stable scratching posts and pads. A scratching post that falls over when your cat tries to scratch on it isn't useful.
- Offer a selection of different scratchable materials such as carpet, sisal, wood and cardboard to give your cat options.
- Try both vertical posts and horizontal or angled boards to learn your cat's preference.
- While your cat is learning, cover off-limits furniture with a tight-fitting sheet or use double-sided sticky tape on those places your cat tends to scratch.

### **How can I prevent my cat from scratching me or people in the family?**

- Make sure to engage in regular play with your cat. This can help burn off energy as well as satisfy your cat's desire to catch "prey."
- Don't use your hands to play with your cat—use an appropriate toy or wand.
- To prevent accidental scratches, keep your cat's claws trimmed using trimmers designed for cats. Make nail trims a calm, weekly routine.

- Talk to your veterinarian about soft plastic caps that are glued over your cat's nails.
- If your cat intentionally scratches people out of fear or aggression, consult with your veterinarian, a trainer or behaviorist for guidance on behavior modification using positive reinforcement.
- Make sure to engage in regular play with your cat. This can help burn off energy as well as satisfy your cat's desire to catch "prey."
- Don't use your hands to play with your cat—use an appropriate toy or wand.
- To prevent accidental scratches, keep your cat's claws trimmed using trimmers designed for cats. Make nail trims a calm, weekly routine.
- Talk to your veterinarian about soft plastic caps that are glued over your cat's nails.
- If your cat intentionally scratches people out of fear or aggression, consult with your veterinarian, a trainer or behaviorist for guidance on behavior modification using positive reinforcement.



# Appendix

Fact sheets and other visual aids like these can be found at [HumanePro.org](http://HumanePro.org).

THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES *hsvma* HUMANE SOCIETY VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

## Cat declawing

Why it's a **bad idea** for your cat

Scratching is a natural behavior for cats. It removes the dead husks from their claws, marks territory (both visually and with scent glands in their paws) and stretches their muscles. Unfortunately, what is natural behavior for a cat often is considered misbehavior by a cat's human guardian, especially when furniture or other household objects are damaged in the process.

### 5 reasons to not declaw your cat:

- 1 Declawing involves amputating the entire last part of the 3rd front toe. A comparison in humans would be cutting off a person's finger at the last joint.
- 2 General anesthesia is used for this surgery, which always has a certain degree of risk associated with it.
- 3 Declawing, whether performed using a scalpel or laser, provides no medical benefits to cats and is a painful procedure.
- 4 Nerves, tendons and muscles are severed along with the joints, making recovery from declawing painful and lengthy.
- 5 Declawing robs a cat of an integral means of balance, movement and defense.

### 5 alternatives to declawing:

- 1 Scratching posts offer an alternative to scratching on furniture. Cats can be trained to use these fairly easily, especially if sprayed with attractive scents, such as catnip.
- 2 Discourage your cat from clawing furniture by using an adhesive scent or spray on furniture, which cats generally do not like, such as citrus.
- 3 Keep your cat's nails trimmed. If the claws are clipped as needed, cats will have less desire to remove the husks of dead claws through scratching.
- 4 Nail caps are available commercially to cover the claws. A nontoxic adhesive is used to attach a plastic cap over each claw.
- 5 Cats should be treated with respect. Declawing is banned in many other countries because it is considered cruel.

Speak with your veterinarian about alternatives to cat declawing.  
Remember: your cat depends upon you for protection.

Use this QR code to find out more about why declawing is bad for your cat.



## DECLAWING: THE PAINFUL TRUTH



### What is declawing?

Declawing is the amputation of the last bone of each toe. It would be like cutting off your fingers at the last knuckle.

### Why do cats scratch?

Scratching is normal cat behavior; it helps your cat stretch, remove dead husks from their claws and add their scent to their surroundings.

### How can I protect my furniture?

To protect home furnishings, give your cat alternative places to scratch. Use positive reinforcement training to teach your cat where they can scratch. While your cat is learning, cover furniture with a tight-fitting sheet or use double-sided sticky tape on the places your cat tends to scratch.

- Offer tall, sturdy scratching posts and pads from different materials like carpet, sisal, wood and cardboard.
- Place multiple scratching posts around your home and near the furniture you don't want scratched.
- Try both vertical posts and horizontal or angled boards to learn your cat's preference.

### How does declawing harm my cat?

Declawing can cause nerve damage, phantom pain, pain from bone fragments left behind or arthritis, and pain-related behavior issues like biting and avoiding the litter box. For these reasons and more, a growing number of veterinary organizations oppose declawing.

### How can I stop my cat from scratching people?

If your cat intentionally scratches people out of fear or aggression, consult a trainer or behaviorist for guidance on behavior modification using positive reinforcement. To prevent accidental scratches, keep your cat's claws trimmed and ask your veterinarian about soft plastic nail caps.

→ Learn more at [humanepro.org/cat-scratching](http://humanepro.org/cat-scratching).

THE HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES



# Our mission

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We fight the big fights to end suffering for all animals.

Together with millions of supporters, the Humane Society of the United States takes on puppy mills, factory farms, the fur trade, trophy hunting, animal cosmetics testing and other cruel industries. Through our rescue, response and sanctuary work, as well as other direct services, we help thousands of animals in need every year.

We fight all forms of animal cruelty to achieve the vision behind our name: a humane society.



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