

2018 -- S 2296

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LC004181  
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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2018

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A N A C T

RELATING TO ANIMALS AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY - CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Introduced By: Senators Paolino, Ruggerio, Morgan, Raptakis, and Goodwin

Date Introduced: February 01, 2018

Referred To: Senate Judiciary

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1           SECTION 1. Chapter 4-1 of the General Laws entitled "Cruelty to Animals" is hereby  
2 amended by adding thereto the following section:

3           **4-1-41.1. Declawing of cats prohibited.**

4           (a) For purposes of this section:

5           (1) "Onychectomy" means the surgical removal in felines of distal phalanges of all digits  
6 of forefeet, less commonly of hind feet. Procedure involves disarticulation of the P2/P3 junction  
7 and subsequent removal of entire P3 bone, at the terminus of which the claw is seated. The  
8 procedure is also known as "declawing".

9           (2) "Phalangectomy" means the surgical excision of one or more of the phalanges of the  
10 foot.

11           (3) "Tendonectomy" means the surgical resection of part of a tendon.

12           (4) "Therapeutic purpose" means the necessity to address the physical medical condition  
13 of the cat, such as an existing or recurring illness, infection, disease, injury, or abnormal condition  
14 in the claw that compromises the cat's health. Therapeutic purpose does not include cosmetic or  
15 aesthetic reasons or reasons of convenience in keeping or handling the cat.

16           (b) No person shall perform an onychectomy (declawing), partial or complete  
17 phalangectomy or tendonectomy procedure by any means on a cat within the state except when  
18 necessary for a therapeutic purpose.

19           (c) Any person found in violation of this section shall be fined not more than one

1 thousand dollars (\$1,000). In addition to any other penalty provided by law, a person fined under  
2 this section may be barred from owning or possessing any animals, or living on the same property  
3 with someone who owns or possesses animals, for a period of time deemed appropriate by the  
4 court, and be required to take humane education, pet ownership and dog training classes as  
5 ordered by the court.

6 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION  
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO ANIMALS AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY - CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

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1           This act would prohibit the practice of declawing cats (onychectomy) or any partial or  
2 complete phalangectomy(s) or tendonectomy(s) on cats.

3           This act would take effect upon passage.

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