

2025 -- H 5668 SUBSTITUTE A

LC001726/SUB A

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2025

A N A C T

RELATING TO ANIMALS AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY -- CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

Introduced By: Representative William W. O'Brien

Date Introduced: February 26, 2025

Referred To: House 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:
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- 4-1-44. Declawing cats prohibited.**
- 4
- (a) For purposes of this section:
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- (1) "Declawing" means an onychectomy or any other surgical procedure to amputate or
- 6
- modify a portion of a cat's paw in order to remove the cat's claws. "Declawing" does not include
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- the trimming of nonviable claw husk or placing nonpermanent nail caps.
- 8
- (2) "Tendonectomy" means a procedure in which the tendons to a cat's limbs, paws, or toes
- 9
- are cut or modified in order that the normal functioning of the claws is impaired.
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- (3) "Therapeutic purpose" means a medically necessary procedure to address an existing
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- or recurring illness, infection, disease, injury, or abnormal condition in the claws, nail bed, or toe
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- bone, that compromises the cat's health. "Therapeutic purpose" shall not include a procedure
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- performed for a cosmetic or aesthetic purpose or to make the cat more convenient to keep or handle.
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- (b) It is unlawful for any person to perform surgical claw removal, declawing, or a
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- tendonectomy on any cat or otherwise alter a cat's toes, claws, or paws to prevent or impair the
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- normal function of the cat's toes, claws, or paws.
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- (c) This section does not apply to a procedure performed solely for a therapeutic purpose.
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- (d) The prosecution of and procedure for discipline for violations of this section shall be in
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- accordance with §§ 5-25-9 and 5-25-15.

1 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect on September 1, 2025.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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RELATING TO ANIMALS AND ANIMAL HUSBANDRY -- CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

- 1 This act would prohibit the declawing of cats by any surgical procedure to amputate or
2 modify a portion of a cat's paw in order to remove the cat's claws. This section would not apply to
3 any procedure performed for a therapeutic purpose.
4 This act would take effect on September 1, 2025.

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