



# New York State Humane Association

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[www.nyshumane.org](http://www.nyshumane.org)

## *A.1297/S.5084*

*Relates to the prohibition of the declawing of cats or other animals*

### **MEMO IN SUPPORT**

The New York State Humane Association (NYSHA), an umbrella group incorporating individuals and animal advocacy organizations statewide, strongly supports this bill.

Declawing cats is a procedure that was once common practice, but is now increasingly reviled due to its inherently painful and cruel nature. It has been outlawed in many countries internationally and in some municipalities in the USA (Norfolk, VA and West Hollywood, CA) due to the unacceptable degree of postoperative pain involved and the development of adverse behaviors that may ensue. Declawing is illegal in the United Kingdom, the European Union, Scandinavia, Russia, Israel, and many other countries whose humane legislation surpasses our own. Their reason for barring this surgery is because the procedure is considered to be a violation of their anti-cruelty laws. Declawing is not a mere “nail trim”: the procedure involves the amputation of the last joint of each of the forepaws’ ten digits, removing the claw permanently and also creating throbbing pain upon the animal’s awakening from the anesthetic. Cats may experience a lifetime of the same “phantom pain” from which human amputees suffer, radiating from the ten surgical amputation sites.

Declawing is so painful that studies have shown that behavior changes may ensue, including litter box avoidance and possibly increased biting behaviors. The feet are left in a mutilated and disfigured state. Cats are secretive about pain and hide their discomforts and disabilities very successfully, permitting owners to be unaware of the traumatic suffering they have imposed on their beloved companion animals. Fortunately, alternative solutions exist that can permit the animals’ guardians to keep their cats’ paws intact and minimize any property damage, such as the use of “Soft Paw” nail caps, proper scratching posts, frequent nail trims, and behavior modification. NYSHA recommends that the legislators and the public familiarize themselves with the following websites for veterinary input and evaluations of the procedure, as well as humane alternatives: [www.declawing.com](http://www.declawing.com) , [www.pawproject.com](http://www.pawproject.com) , and [www.petstation.com/declaw.html](http://www.petstation.com/declaw.html) .

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