



SPONSOR: Rep. Bennett & Rep. K. Williams & Sen. Walsh  
Reps. Baumbach, Heffernan, Lynn

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
151st GENERAL ASSEMBLY

HOUSE BILL NO. 333

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLES 16 AND 24 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO DECLAWING CATS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE (Three-fifths of all members elected to each house thereof concurring therein):

Section 1. Amend Chapter 30F of Title 16 by making deletions as shown by strike through and insertions as shown by underline as follows:

Subchapter VII. Declawing Cats.

§ 3093F. Purpose.

This subchapter prohibits the declawing of cats except for therapeutic purposes.

§ 3094F. Definitions.

For purposes of this subchapter:

(1) “Declawing procedure” means an onychectomy, dactylectomy, phalangectomy, or any other procedure that removes a portion of the paw or digit of a cat in order to remove a claw. “Declawing procedure” includes a tendonectomy or any other procedure that cuts or modifies the tendon of the limb, paw, or digit of a cat in order to prohibit the extension of a claw or prevents the normal functioning of 1 or more claws of a cat. “Declawing procedure” does not include nail filing, nail trimming, or the placement of temporary nail caps on 1 or more claws of a cat.

(2) “Therapeutic purpose” means to address a physical or medical condition that compromises the health or well-being of a cat. “Therapeutic purpose” does not include cosmetic or aesthetic reasons or reasons of convenience in the keeping or handling of a cat.

§ 3095F. Declawing prohibited.

No person may perform a declawing procedure on a cat except when necessary for a therapeutic purpose.

§ 3096F. Fine.

A violation of §3095F of this title is a civil offense subject to a civil fine not to exceed \$1,000.

Section 2. Amend Chapter 33 of Title 24 by making deletions as shown by strike through and insertions as shown by underline as follows:

§ 3316. Grounds for discipline; procedure.

(a) A veterinarian licensed under this subchapter shall be subject to disciplinary sanctions set forth in § 3317 of this title, if, after a hearing, the Board finds that the veterinarian has:

(12) ~~Been cruel to animals;~~ Been cruel to animals. This offense includes declawing a cat as defined in §3094F of Title 16.

§3321. Grounds for discipline; procedure.

(a) A veterinary technician licensed under this subchapter shall be subject to disciplinary actions set forth in § 3322 of this title, if, after a hearing, the Board finds that the veterinary technician:

(8) ~~Has been cruel to animals;~~ Has been cruel to animals. This offense includes declawing a cat as defined in §3094F of Title 16.

#### SYNOPSIS

This Act amends Title 16 by prohibiting all persons from declawing a cat; a procedure defined as a onychectomy, dactylectomy, phalangectomy, tendonectomy, or any other procedure that removes a portion of the paw or digit of a cat in order to remove a claw or cuts or modifies the tendon of the limb, paw, or digit of a cat to prohibit the extension of a claw. The Act excludes declawing a cat for therapeutic purposes as defined in the Act. A violation under the Act will be considered a civil offense subject to a civil fine up to \$1,000. This Act also amends Title 24 specifying that if a veterinarian or a veterinarian technician is found to have declawed a cat, such act will be considered to have been acting “cruel to animals”, and they will be subject to professional disciplinary action.