

## 1 VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY — CHAPTER

2 *An Act to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Chapter 38 of Title 54.1 a section numbered*  
3 *54.1-3814, relating to declawing cats; prohibition.*

4 [H 1354]

5 Approved

6 **Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

7 **1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Chapter 38 of Title 54.1 a section numbered**  
8 **54.1-3814 as follows:**

9 **§ 54.1-3814. Declawing cats; prohibition.**10 *A. As used in this section:*11 *"Cat" means any domesticated species of the family Felidae and does not include any wild or*  
12 *nonnative species of the family Felidae.*13 *"Declawing procedure" means (i) an onychectomy, a dactylectomy, a phalangectomy, or any other*  
14 *procedure that removes a portion of the paw or digit of a cat in order to remove a claw; (ii) a*  
15 *tendonectomy or any other procedure that cuts or modifies the tendon of the limb, paw, or digit of a cat*  
16 *in order to prohibit the normal movement of a claw; or (iii) any procedure that prevents the normal*  
17 *functioning of one or more claws of a cat. "Declawing procedure" does not include nail filing, nail*  
18 *trimming, or the placement of temporary nail caps on one or more claws of a cat.*19 *"Therapeutic purpose" means any action intended (i) to address an existing or recurring infection,*  
20 *disease, injury, or abnormal condition in an animal's claw, nail bed, or toe bone that jeopardizes the*  
21 *animal's health, and for which addressing the infection, disease, injury, or abnormal condition is a*  
22 *medical necessity, as documented by a licensed veterinarian, or (ii) to protect the owner's life or health,*  
23 *as documented by a licensed physician, when such owner has been diagnosed with an infection, disease,*  
24 *disorder, or similar condition that could reasonably be expected to worsen if such owner were to be*  
25 *scratched by a cat. For purposes of this definition, "owner" includes members of the owner's household.*26 *"Therapeutic purpose" does not include any action performed for cosmetic or aesthetic reasons or*  
27 *reasons of convenience in the keeping or handling of a cat.*28 *B. It is unlawful for any person engaged in the practice of veterinary medicine to perform a*  
29 *declawing procedure on a cat, except such person may perform such a procedure if it is necessary for a*  
30 *therapeutic purpose.*

ENROLLED

HB1354ER