

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 1178 Session of
2024

INTRODUCED BY COMITTA, FONTANA, CAPPELLETTI, ROBINSON, COSTA,
MASTRIANO AND MUTH, APRIL 22, 2024

REFERRED TO JUDICIARY, APRIL 22, 2024

AN ACT

1 Amending Title 18 (Crimes and Offenses) of the Pennsylvania
2 Consolidated Statutes, in cruelty to animals, further
3 providing for animal mutilation and related offenses.

4 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
5 hereby enacts as follows:

6 Section 1. Section 5542 of Title 18 of the Pennsylvania
7 Consolidated Statutes is amended by adding a subsection to read:
8 § 5542. Animal mutilation and related offenses.

9 * * *

10 (e.1) Declawing of cats.--The following shall apply:

11 (1) A person commits an offense under section 5533 if
12 the person performs a declawing procedure that is not deemed
13 necessary for a therapeutic purpose by a licensed doctor of
14 veterinary medicine.

15 (2) In addition to any other penalty provided by law, a
16 violation of this subsection constitutes a summary offense
17 punishable as follows:

18 (i) for a first offense, by a fine of not less than

1 \$50 and not more than \$750;

2 (ii) for a second offense, by a fine of not less
3 than \$150 and not more than \$1,000; or

4 (iii) for a third or subsequent offense, by a fine
5 of not less than \$500 and not more than \$1,500.

6 (3) Nothing in this section shall preclude prosecution
7 under section 5533 or 5534 (relating to aggravated cruelty to
8 animal).

9 (4) As used in this subsection, the following words and
10 phrases shall have the meanings given to them in this
11 paragraph unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

12 "Declawing." The term:

13 (i) Includes:

14 (A) An onychectomy, dactylectomy, partial
15 digital amputation, phalangectomy or any other
16 procedure that removes a portion of the paw or digit
17 of an animal in order to remove a claw.

18 (B) A tendonectomy or any other procedure that
19 cuts or modifies the tendon of the limb, paw or digit
20 of an animal in order to prohibit the normal function
21 of a claw.

22 (C) A procedure that prevents the normal
23 functioning of one or more claws.

24 (ii) Does not include the filing or trimming of a
25 nonviable claw husk or the placement of temporary nail
26 caps on one or more claws of an animal.

27 "Therapeutic purpose." A purpose necessary to address an
28 existing or recurring physical illness, infection, disease,
29 injury or abnormal condition in a claw, nail bed or toe bone
30 that compromises the cat's health. The term does not include

1 cosmetic or aesthetic reasons or reasons of convenience in
2 keeping or handling the cat.

3 * * *

4 Section 2. This act shall take effect in 60 days.