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**SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1904**

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**State of Washington**

**69th Legislature**

**2026 Regular Session**

**By** House Health Care & Wellness (originally sponsored by Representatives Peterson, Leavitt, Parshley, Fosse, and Macri)

READ FIRST TIME 01/27/26.

1 AN ACT Relating to prohibiting the act of declawing cats; adding  
2 a new section to chapter 18.92 RCW; and prescribing penalties.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 18.92  
5 RCW to read as follows:

6 (1) It is unlawful for any person engaged in the practice of  
7 veterinary medicine to perform a declawing procedure on a cat, unless  
8 necessary for a therapeutic purpose.

9 (2) This section preempts any ordinance regulating the practice  
10 of declawing a cat enacted by a county, city, town, or other  
11 political subdivision of this state.

12 (3) For the purposes of this section, the following definitions  
13 apply:

14 (a) "Cat" means any domesticated species of the family *Felidae*  
15 and does not include any wild or nonnative species of the family  
16 *Felidae*.

17 (b) (i) "Declawing procedure" means:

18 (A) An onychectomy, a dactylectomy, a phalangectomy, or any other  
19 procedure that removes a portion of the paw or digit of a cat in  
20 order to remove a claw;

1 (B) A tendonectomy or any other procedure that cuts or modifies  
2 the tendon of the limb, paw, or digit of a cat in order to prohibit  
3 the normal movement of a claw; or

4 (C) Any procedure that prevents the normal functioning of one or  
5 more claws of a cat.

6 (ii) "Declawing procedure" does not include nail filing, nail  
7 trimming, or the placement of temporary nail caps on one or more  
8 claws of a cat.

9 (c)(i) "Therapeutic purpose" means any action intended to address  
10 as a matter of medical necessity an existing or recurring infection,  
11 disease, injury, or abnormal condition in the claw, nail bed, or toe  
12 bone that jeopardizes the afflicted animal's health.

13 (ii) "Therapeutic purpose" does not include any action performed  
14 for cosmetic or aesthetic reasons or reasons of convenience in the  
15 keeping or handling of an animal.

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