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State of Minnesota

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-THIRD SESSION

H. F. No. 4956

03/14/2024 Authored by Smith and Tabke
The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Agriculture Finance and Policy

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to animal cruelty; prohibiting elective declawing of cats; imposing civil
1.3 penalties; proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 343.

1.4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.5 Section 1. 343.256 ELECTIVE DECLAWING PROHIBITED.

1.6 Subdivision 1. Definitions. (a) For purposes of this section, the terms in this subdivision
1.7 have the meanings given.

1.8 (b) "Cat" means an animal of the taxonomic family Felidae.

1.9 (c) "Declawing" means an onychectomy or any other surgical procedure to amputate or
1.10 modify a portion of a cat's paw in order to remove the cat's claws. Declawing does not
1.11 include the trimming of nonviable claw husk or placing nonpermanent nail caps.

1.12 (d) "Tendonectomy" means a procedure in which the tendons to a cat's limbs, paws, or
1.13 toes are cut or modified so that the normal functioning of the claws is impaired.

1.14 (e) "Therapeutic purpose" means a medically necessary procedure to address an existing
1.15 or recurring infection, disease, injury, or abnormal condition in the claws, nail bed, or toe
1.16 bone, that jeopardizes the cat's health. Therapeutic purpose does not include a procedure
1.17 performed for a cosmetic or aesthetic purpose or to make the cat more convenient to keep
1.18 or handle.

1.19 Subd. 2. Prohibited acts. Except as provided in subdivision 3, a person shall not perform
1.20 surgical claw removal, declawing, or a tendonectomy on any cat or otherwise alter a cat's
1.21 toes, claws, or paws in a manner that prevents or impairs the normal function of the cat's
1.22 toes, claws, or paws.

2.1 Subd. 3. **Therapeutic purpose.** The prohibition in subdivision 2 does not apply to a
2.2 procedure performed solely for a therapeutic purpose.

2.3 Subd. 4. **Civil penalties.** A person who violates this section is subject to a civil penalty
2.4 of \$500 for the first violation, \$1,000 for the second violation, and \$2,500 for the third and
2.5 any subsequent violation. Civil penalties may be recovered by a civil action brought by the
2.6 county attorney or the attorney general in the name of the state.