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# OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

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S.B. 252  
136<sup>th</sup> General Assembly

## Bill Analysis

**Version:** As Introduced

**Primary Sponsors:** Sens. Cutrona and Craig

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### SUMMARY

- Prohibits a person, by any means, from knowingly performing certain procedures relating to declawing a cat.
- Establishes exemptions to the prohibition, including any procedure determined to be necessary by an Ohio licensed veterinarian for a therapeutic purpose.
- Requires the Director of Agriculture to impose a civil penalty against a person who violates the prohibition of between \$1,000 and \$2,500, depending on the number of prior offenses committed by the person.

### DETAILED ANALYSIS

#### Declawing of cats

The bill prohibits a person from knowingly declawing a cat by any of the following means:

1. An onychectomy, which is a procedure in which a portion of the paw of a cat is amputated or the claw of a cat is disabled, including a procedure that is commonly referred to as declawing.
2. A partial digit amputation, which is a procedure for the excision of some or all of one or more of the phalanges of the paw of a cat.
3. A phalangectomy, which is a procedure for the excision of one or more of the phalanges of the paw of a cat.
4. A tendonectomy, which is a procedure in which the tendons to the limbs, paws, or toes of a cat are cut or modified so that the cat's claws cannot function normally.

5. Any other procedure to alter a cat's toes, claws, or paws to prevent the normal functioning of the cat's toes, claws, or paws.<sup>1</sup>

## Exemptions

The bill exempts the following procedures from the prohibition:

1. A procedure that is determined to be necessary for a therapeutic purpose by an Ohio licensed veterinarian. A "therapeutic purpose" is a purpose necessary to address a physical medical condition of a cat, such as an existing or recurring physical illness, infection, disease, injury, or abnormal condition in a claw that compromises the cat's health. "Therapeutic purpose" does not mean cosmetic or aesthetic purposes or purposes of convenience in the keeping, harboring, or handling of a cat.
2. A procedure that solely involves the trimming of a nonviable claw husk or placing a nonpermanent nail cap on a cat.<sup>2</sup>

If a licensed veterinarian determines that a procedure is necessary for a therapeutic purpose, the licensed veterinarian, within ten business days after performing the procedure, must file a written statement with the Ohio Veterinary Medical Licensing Board. The statement must include all of the following:

- The purpose of the procedure, including a laboratory pathology report confirming the pathology;
- Identifying information of the cat, including its microchip number, if applicable, age, gender, and markings and a photo of the cat's face; and
- Identifying information of the cat's owner or keeper, including the owner's current address and telephone number.

The licensed veterinarian must provide a copy of the written statement to the cat's owner or keeper.<sup>3</sup>

## Penalties

The Director of Agriculture must impose a civil penalty on a person who violates the bill's prohibition as follows:

1. \$1,000 on a first offense;
2. \$1,500 on a second offense; and
3. \$2,500 on a third and any subsequent offense.

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<sup>1</sup> R.C. 959.22(A)(2) to (5) and (B)(1).

<sup>2</sup> R.C. 959.22(B)(2).

<sup>3</sup> R.C. 959.22(C).

The Director must afford the person an opportunity for an adjudication hearing under the Administrative Procedure Act to challenge the Director's determination that the person committed a violation.<sup>4</sup>

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## HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	09-03-25

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ANSB0252IN-136/ts

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<sup>4</sup> R.C. 959.22(D).