

New York's Cat Declawing Ban

By: Janet Kaminski Leduc, Chief Attorney
November 18, 2019 | 2019-R-0278

Issue

Summarize New York's 2019 law banning cat declawing ([S 5532](#)).

Summary

S 5532 became law on July 22, 2019, making New York the first state to prohibit cat declawing. (Several cities, such as Los Angeles and San Francisco, also ban the practice.)

Specifically, New York's law prohibits anyone from performing an onychectomy, partial or complete phalangectomy, or tendonectomy procedure on a cat in the state except for a therapeutic purpose. "Therapeutic purpose" means it is necessary to address the cat's physical medical condition, including illness, disease, injury, or abnormal claw condition that compromises the cat's health. It does not include (1) cosmetic or aesthetic reasons or (2) convenience reasons in keeping or handling the cat. The law subjects violators to a civil penalty of up to \$1,000 ([N.Y. Agric. & Mkts. Law § 381](#)).

An onychectomy is the surgical removal of an animal's claws by amputating all or part of the distal phalanges, or end bones, of the animal's toes. A phalangectomy is the amputation of the distal phalanges of all toes on the animal's front paws, and sometimes the rear paws as well. A tendonectomy is the surgical cutting of tendons.

JKL:kl