

## PAW PROJECT

A 501(c)(3)  
nonprofit  
organization

# The Paw Project



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## Paw Project Leads Successful Campaign to Ban Declawing in Seven California Cities

### ABOUT DECLAWING

Declawing, also called onychectomy, is an amputation of the toe at the last joint. This removes the bone from which the nail grows. Declawing may result in permanent lameness, chronic pain, infection, and arthritis. It is illegal in many countries.

Since 2000, Paw Project vets have performed reparative surgeries on lions, servals, tigers, cougars, bobcats, lynxes, leopards, jaguars, and domestic cats – all victims of declaw surgery. Their claws cannot be restored, but tendons can be reattached, giving the cats much relief from their long suffering and allowing them to leap, run, and play more as nature intended.



**SANTA MONICA** – Paw Project volunteers led the fight to persuade local government officials in seven California cities to ban declawing during a six week period at the end of 2009. Declawing is the amputation of the terminal bones of cats' toes to remove their claws in order to prevent unwanted scratching. The practice is illegal or considered unacceptable in much of the world.

Santa Monica, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Berkeley, Beverly Hills, Culver City, and Burbank join West Hollywood, which has banned declawing since 2003. Declawing cats is now a misdemeanor that can result in \$1000 fines and up to six months in jail.

The Paw Project's efforts were aided by the actions of declawing proponents, which ironically facilitated the passage of the anti-declaw laws. By early 2009, the California Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) had spent hundreds of thousands of dollars, and



LA City Councilmember Paul Koretz authored the LA Anti-Declaw Ordinance. "Los Angeles has long been committed to being animal-cruelty free," Koretz said. "Declawing does no good for the cat ... It is a form of mutilation."

their lobbyists had spent hundreds of hours trying to quash the anti-declaw movement. In 2005, the CVMA had sued West Hollywood to overturn its anti-declaw law. West Hollywood and its cats were represented *pro bono* by attorney Orly Degani. The ordinance was upheld in

appellate court after two years of litigation. The CVMA then initiated its backdoor attempt to circumvent the Court's decision by sponsoring a state bill, SB 762, which was sold to the legislators as the "Healing Arts Licensing Freedom Act." The bill did not

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# Declawing Banned in Seven Cities in Six Weeks



"Declawing is amputating a cat's first paw joints, including the claw, at the first knuckle," said Beverly Hills Councilman John Mirisch. "I find this practice to be a *prima facie* instance of animal cruelty, and I don't need Big Brother in Sacramento or a veterinary board to tell me otherwise." The Beverly Hills Council voted 5-0 to ban declawing.

(Continued from page 1)

directly address the issue of declawing or any other veterinary practice. Instead, it forbade local governments from regulating any aspect of any of the health care professions – dentistry, medicine, optometry, or veterinary medicine. The subterfuge worked, and SB 762 passed in July, effectively preventing any more cities or counties from banning declawing. Fortunately, the law did not take effect until January 1, 2010.

Several cities, realizing that their powers to ban animal cruelty were about to be usurped, responded to the Paw Project and its arguments to ban declawing.

Draft language for the ordinances was developed by UCLA Law Professor Taimie Bryant, a longtime advisor to the Paw Project. Other animal advocates, including animal rights veterinarian Dr. Ken Jones, national anti-declaw authority Dr. Jean Hofve, and members of the Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association, joined the effort.

On October 27, 2009, Santa Monica City Council voted 6-1 to ban declawing. Councilmember Kevin McKeown called declawing "an unacceptable act of animal cruelty."

On November 3, San Francisco voted 9-2 to ban declawing. "It's a form of animal cruelty," said Supervisor Ross Mirkarimi, who introduced the ordinance. Two days later, Beverly Hills followed with 5-0 vote. On November 6, the Los Angeles City Council approved the ban 11-0, and declawing was banned in the nation's second largest city.

"The bottom line is, you take the claws from a cat, you take away the cat, because a cat needs its claws to live like a cat," said Councilman Bill Rosendahl.

Berkeley joined in on November 10, voting 9-0. Culver City followed suit with a unanimous vote on November 23. Burbank jumped in on December 8, with a 4-1 approval.

Before SB 762 was signed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, declawing was banned in only 0.1 % of California. At the end of 2009, cats in 15% of the state were protected.

## Diablo's Extreme Makeover

The Paw Project appeared on *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*, the popular ABC reality television series providing home renovations for deserving families. The EM:HE team recently visited the Almquist family who run Forever Wild Exotic Animal Sanctuary in Phelan, California. The family and the animals both received luxurious new living quarters.

When Dr. Jennifer Conrad was hired by ABC's production company to move the animals at Forever Wild Exotic Animal Sanctuary, she took the opportunity to ask the Executive Producer, Brady Connell, if, in the spirit of the show, she could take a newly rescued tiger, Diablo, to have his paws repaired. The entire production crew thought that that would be a great idea.

Diablo, a six-year old, 500 pound tiger, was crippled by the declawing procedure performed on him by his previous owner. The owner, a Las Vegas entertainer,

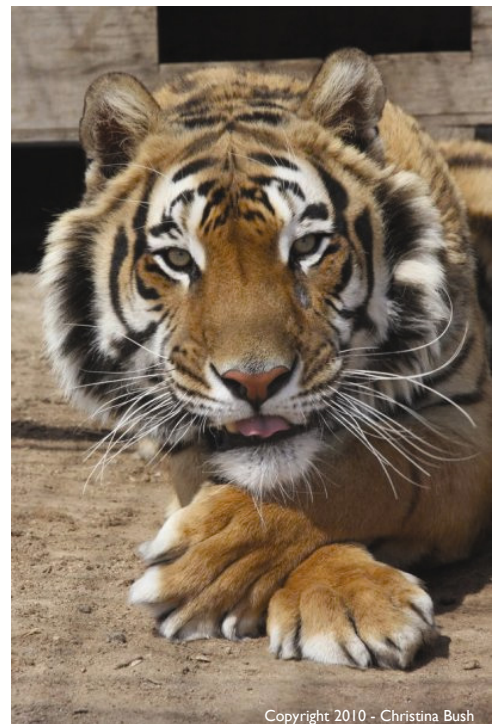
dumped Diablo at Forever Wild when he could no longer use the lame tiger in his show.

Dr. Conrad, Dr. Wendelburg, and the staff at Animal Specialty Group repaired the paws of Diablo on the show. Diablo came home with a makeover of his feet while his new enclosure was being built.

Both of Diablo's front paws have now been repaired. "It was a good thing that we were able to treat him," said Dr. Conrad, "His pads were already cracked and atrophied. It was obvious that he was in a great deal of pain."

The show aired to approximately 11,000,000 households. It included the heart-rending testimonials from the Almquist children who spoke tearfully about their many animals who have suffered from the after-effects of declawing.

Diablo, right, was named because he was so grumpy and fierce. It was obvious that his paws hurt him. Now he is "a real sweetheart."



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# Paw Project Unveils Anti-Declaw Billboard

LOS ANGELES - The Paw Project recently unveiled its latest campaign to educate the public about the harmful consequences of declawing, a billboard that reads, IF YOU'RE FOR DE-CLAWING, RAISE YOUR HAND.

The billboard was first located on the iconic Sunset Strip. It depicts a human hand with each finger severed at the last joint and is a graphic and anatomically-correct representation of declaw surgery performed on cats and other animals.

Billboard space was generously donated to the Paw Project by Brian Kennedy, owner of Regency Outdoor Advertising, and the design was produced *pro bono* by Cathy Saidiner of the world renowned McCann Erickson agency, a prominent advertising firm.

The billboard has since been displayed in several other locations around Los Angeles. Paw Project founder Dr. Jennifer Conrad said, "We hope that this billboard makes people realize that declawing is inhumane and should be illegal."

The news media immediately picked up the powerful billboard, which was featured in a number of newspaper articles. It even was displayed in Times Square in New York City.

*Advertising Age* magazine described the billboard campaign as an outstanding example of "cause marketing" in the Good Works section of the publication.

The Paw Project's billboard was first displayed in August 2009 on Sunset Boulevard, across the street from the famous music club, the Whisky-A-Go-Go.



## More Vets Find Declawing Cats Unacceptable

Since the first declaw ban was passed in West Hollywood in 2003, fewer declaw procedures have been performed in the neighboring Southern California communities, as more veterinarians and their clients reject the procedure.

California Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) President Dr. Mark Nunez told Paw Project director, Dr. Jennifer Conrad, "I believe that the Paw Project's educational efforts are responsible for the decrease in declaws that I see done."

CVMA House of Delegates member, Dr. Nada Khalaf, in her testimony at a Los Angeles City Council committee hearing, also attributed a diminishing number of declaw surgeries performed as a result of Paw

Project educational programs.

At the same time, the number of veterinarians willing to testify in favor of local declaw bans dramatically increased. In Santa Monica, 14 veterinarians supported

*"First they ignore you, then they ridicule you, then they fight you, then you win."*  
- Mahatma Gandhi

the ordinance during public hearings.

"It comes down to animal cruelty and mutilating an animal for the convenience of its guardian," said Dr. Armaiti May.

"Declawing is a completely unnecessary

procedure." Southern California Veterinary Medical Association Past President Dr. Robert Goldman echoed the sentiment and praised the LA city officials for banning declawing. "Kudos to the City Council for calling cruelty what it is.... Unfortunately this procedure is done for economic gain and not always as a last resort."

Santa Monica feline practitioner Dr. James Schulke strongly supported the ban, calling it "a perfect example of a situation that requires legislation by government...to control these situations that are unethical or inhumane, and ban them.... We rely on our government officials to do the right thing for our city, and for the animals who do not have a voice."



**IF YOU'RE FOR  
DE-CLAWING CATS,  
RAISE YOUR HAND.**  
PawProject.org

### BUMPER STICKERS AND POSTERS AVAILABLE NOW

The bumper stickers are approximately 4 x 11 inches and the posters are 10 x 19 inches. To order, send your name and address to [info@pawproject.org](mailto:info@pawproject.org). Donations are appreciated to defray the costs of printing and mailing.

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organization**

Paw Project  
PO Box 445  
Santa Monica, CA 90406

Phone: 1 877 PAW-PROJECT  
1 877 729-7765  
E-mail: [info@pawproject.com](mailto:info@pawproject.com)

**visit our website  
[www.pawproject.org](http://www.pawproject.org)**

The Paw Project/  
Animal General Hospital  
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animal welfare organization.

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The Paw Project's mission is to promote the humane and ethical treatment of animals, to educate the public about the painful and crippling effects of declawing, to end the practice of declaw surgery, and to rehabilitate cats that have been declawed.

Tax-deductible contributions to the Paw Project are used to pay for surgical facilities and supplies, educational programs, and anti-declawing efforts.



## Malibu – Declaw Center of Southern California?

With declawing banned in six nearby cities, will Malibu become – in the words of Malibu Surfside News columnist, Bill Koeneker – the “Cat Crippling Capital of Southern California?”

On October 12, Paw Project veterinarians and volunteers asked Malibu City Council to ban declawing. Despite strong support from Councilmembers Pamela Conley Ulich and Jefferson Wagner, the Council voted 3-2 against the ban.

However, the Council did unanimously support a non-binding resolution that calls for an end to declawing.

Koeneker lamented that “because so many neighboring communities are banning the practice, Malibu may be where

the operations are performed most” and that the decision would “be one more thing the community is castigated for by its critics in the outside world.”

Councilmember John Sibert did not foresee the future when he called the ban “symbolic,” because, he predicted, pet owners would just “travel over the hill” to neighboring cities to have their cats declawed.

He was soon proved wrong when both of Malibu's closest neighboring cities, Los Angeles and Santa Monica, banned declawing within weeks of the Council's rejection. Nearby Beverly Hills, Culver City, Burbank, and West Hollywood also have added declaw bans to their municipal codes.

Then-Councilmember Sharon Barovsky insisted the matter was an “either-or” situation. She said a ban would preclude other options and lead to animals being dumped in shelters.

Barovsky rejected scientific evidence, widely accepted in eight other California cities, that declawing may lead to behavioral problems, such as litter box avoidance and biting. These behaviors are much more likely than unwanted scratching to cause a cat to be relinquished to an animal shelter.

Barovsky and another of the “no” votes, Andy Stern, are no longer on the City Council. The Paw Project hopes that Malibu vets will voluntarily forgo declawing and get with the trend.

## Please Support Bill - AB 2743

You can help pass the Paw Project's bill by writing letters of support for AB 2743 to legislators.

Go to the Paw Project website, <http://www.pawproject.com/html/what.asp>

You will find a sample letter there, as well as contact information.



## The Paw Project Sponsors California Bill

The Paw Project is the sponsor of a bill currently before the California legislature.

The bill, AB 2743, was introduced by Assemblyman Pedro Nava. If passed, it will make it illegal for a landlord to require declawing or devocalization as a condition of tenancy or to advertise in a way to discourage prospective tenants with animals that have not been declawed or devocalized. The bill's language was prepared by Paw Project consultant, UCLA Law Professor Taimie Bryant.

The bill allows for a civil fine of \$2,500 for each instance of

declawing or devocalization.

The bill has passed in the state Assembly with a 63-7 vote and was supported by United Animal Nations, Animal Advocates, the Humane Society of the United States and other animal advocacy organizations. The bill will be heard in the state Senate in June.

The Paw Project and supporters of AB 2743 believe the bill is necessary because rental listings in California indicate that some landlords require that potential tenants declaw their cats.

Declawed cats may avoid litter boxes, so declawing can lead to the unintended consequence of

property damage for landlords, as well as physical complications for animals, and emotional and financial consequences for animal guardians.

Devocalization (or “debarking”) is a surgical procedure where tissue is cut or removed from animals' vocal cords in order to permanently reduce the volume of their vocalizations. Devocalization is already illegal in New Jersey and Massachusetts. Current federal law prohibits Public Housing Authorities from requiring tenants to devocalize their animals.



Diana is an 8 year old female white tiger who lived with the Las Vegas animal trainer, who had declawed her, until he recently decided that she wasn't profitable anymore. He turned her over to Forever Wild Exotic Animal Sanctuary in Phelan, California to take her (calling her a donation!) She was declawed as a baby and has learned to live with this incredible handicap.

She now has a new chance at a happy life, but needs to have her very painful paws repaired. The Paw Project team would like to fix Diana's feet soon.

Diana's corrective surgery, and the total cost for the facilities, technicians, and medication will be \$3500 to \$4000 per surgery. Many cats require multiple surgeries to repair their mutilated paws. Your contribution can help end declawing and give Diana and other declawed big cats new lives. Please give them a chance to live without the pain they are suffering today.

**Thank you**

I'm enclosing a check to **The Paw Project** to help end the crippling effects of declawing.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$15.00 - Student/Senior | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500.00 - Advocate    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$30.00 - Friend         | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1000.00 - Benefactor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$60.00 - Associate      | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1500.00 - Sponsor    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100.00 - Supporter     | <input type="checkbox"/> \$3000.00 - Patron     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$250.00 - Donor         | <input type="checkbox"/> \$_____ - other amount |

**Credit card or PayPal donations can be accepted online at [www.pawproject.org](http://www.pawproject.org)**

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Thank you. **The Paw Project** is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. All gifts are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

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