
ASSEMBLY BILL NO. 209—ASSEMBLYWOMEN MARTINEZ; AND
GORELOW

MARCH 8, 2021

Referred to Committee on Natural Resources

SUMMARY—Prohibits the removal or disabling of the claws of a cat under certain circumstances. (BDR 50-211)

FISCAL NOTE: Effect on Local Government: No.
Effect on the State: Yes.

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EXPLANATION – Matter in *bolded italics* is new; matter between brackets [omitted material] is material to be omitted.

AN ACT relating to animals; prohibiting a person from removing or disabling the claws of a cat by performing certain procedures except if necessary to address the physical medical condition of the cat; prohibiting the removal or disabling of the claws of a cat for cosmetic, aesthetic or convenience reasons; requiring licensed veterinarians to submit certain statements regarding removing or disabling the claws of a cat; imposing civil penalties and providing other matters properly relating thereto.

Legislative Counsel’s Digest:

1 Existing law prohibits various actions that result in cruelty to animals. (NRS
2 574.050-574.200) **Section 1** of this bill prohibits a person from removing or
3 disabling the claws of a cat by performing or causing to be performed certain
4 procedures, including declawing the cat. **Section 1** authorizes the removal or
5 disabling of the claws of a cat if the procedure is necessary to address the physical
6 medical condition of the cat, including addressing an existing or recurring illness,
7 infection, disease, injury or abnormal condition, as determined by a licensed
8 veterinarian. **Section 1** provides that a person shall not remove or disable the claws
9 of a cat for cosmetic or aesthetic reasons or for reasons of convenience in keeping
10 or handling the cat.

11 **Section 1** requires a licensed veterinarian who determines that the removal or
12 disabling of the claws of a cat is necessary to address the physical medical
13 condition of the cat to: (1) prepare and file a written statement with the Nevada
14 State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners setting forth the purpose for
15 performing the procedure and providing the name and address of the owner or
16 keeper of the cat; and (2) provide a copy of the statement to the owner or keeper of
17 the cat. **Section 1** requires the statement to be provided to the Board before



18 performing the procedure or, in the case of an emergency, not later than 5 days after
19 performing the procedure.

20 **Section 1** imposes the following civil penalties on any person who violates
21 **section 1** by unlawfully performing or causing to be performed certain procedures
22 for removing or disabling the claws of a cat: (1) for the first violation, a civil
23 penalty of not more than \$1,000; (2) for the second violation, a civil penalty of not
24 more than \$1,500; and (3) for the third or subsequent violation, a civil penalty of
25 not more than \$2,500. **Section 1** imposes the following civil penalties on any
26 licensed veterinarian for a violation of **section 1** related to the written statement
27 required to be filed with the Nevada State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners:
28 (1) for the first violation, a civil penalty of not more than \$100; (2) for the second
29 violation, a civil penalty of not more than \$150; and (3) for the third or subsequent
30 violation, a civil penalty of not more than \$250. **Section 1** additionally provides
31 that a licensed veterinarian who violates any provision of **section 1** is subject to
32 disciplinary action by the Board. **Section 5** of this bill makes a conforming change
33 by listing the violation of **section 1** as a ground for disciplinary action. If the Board
34 determines that a licensed veterinarian has violated **section 1**, the Board may: (1)
35 refuse to issue a license; (2) refuse to renew a license; (3) revoke a license; (4)
36 suspend a license for a definite period; (5) impose a fine of not more than \$10,000
37 for each act; (6) place a licensed veterinarian on probation; (7) administer a public
38 reprimand; (8) limit the practice of the licensed veterinarian to specified branches
39 of veterinary medicine; or (9) require the licensed veterinarian to take a
40 competency examination or a mental or physical examination. (NRS 638.147)

41 **Sections 2, 3 and 4** of this bill make conforming changes to indicate the
42 placement of **section 1** in the Nevada Revised Statutes.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, REPRESENTED IN
SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

1 **Section 1.** Chapter 574 of NRS is hereby amended by adding
2 thereto a new section to read as follows:

3 *1. A person shall not remove or disable the claws of a cat by*
4 *performing or causing to be performed an onychectomy, partial or*
5 *complete phalangectomy or tendonectomy procedure, or any other*
6 *surgical procedure that prevents the normal functioning of the*
7 *claws of a cat, on a cat within this State, except if necessary to*
8 *address the physical medical condition of the cat, including,*
9 *without limitation, addressing an existing or recurring illness,*
10 *infection, disease, injury or abnormal condition in the claw of the*
11 *cat that compromises the health of the cat, as determined by a*
12 *licensed veterinarian. A person shall not remove or disable the*
13 *claws of a cat for cosmetic or aesthetic reasons or for reasons of*
14 *convenience in keeping or handling the cat.*

15 *2. If a licensed veterinarian determines that it is necessary to*
16 *remove or disable the claws of a cat to address the physical*
17 *medical condition of the cat, as described in subsection 1, the*
18 *licensed veterinarian shall, before performing the procedure or*
19 *not later than 5 days after performing the procedure if the*
20 *procedure is required in the case of an emergency:*



1 (a) Prepare and file a written statement with the Nevada State
2 Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners setting forth the purpose
3 for performing the procedure and providing the name and address
4 of the owner or keeper of the cat; and

5 (b) Provide a copy of the statement to the owner or keeper of
6 the cat.

7 3. Any person who violates a provision of subsection 1 shall:

8 (a) For the first violation, pay a civil penalty of not more than
9 \$1,000;

10 (b) For the second violation, pay a civil penalty of not more
11 than \$1,500; and

12 (c) For the third or subsequent violation, pay a civil penalty of
13 not more than \$2,500.

14 ↪ Any money collected pursuant to this subsection must be
15 deposited with the State Treasurer for credit to the State General
16 Fund.

17 4. Any licensed veterinarian who violates a provision of
18 subsection 2 shall:

19 (a) For the first violation, pay a civil penalty of not more than
20 \$100;

21 (b) For the second violation, pay a civil penalty of not more
22 than \$150; and

23 (c) For the third or subsequent violation, pay a civil penalty of
24 not more than \$250.

25 ↪ Any money collected pursuant to this subsection must be
26 deposited with the State Treasurer for credit to the State General
27 Fund.

28 5. In addition to the penalties described in subsections 3 and
29 4, a licensed veterinarian who fails to comply with the provisions
30 of this section is subject to disciplinary action by the Nevada State
31 Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners pursuant to
32 NRS 638.140.

33 6. The Attorney General may recover the civil penalty for a
34 violation of subsection 1 or 2 in a civil action brought in the name
35 of the State of Nevada in any court of competent jurisdiction.

36 7. As used in this section:

37 (a) "Cat" means a domestic cat of the species Felis catus or a
38 hybrid of that species. The term includes, without limitation, a
39 Savannah cat, Serengeti cat, Maine coon, Bengal cat or Chausic.

40 (b) "Licensed veterinarian" has the meaning ascribed to it in
41 NRS 638.007.

42 (c) "Onychectomy" means any surgical procedure in which a
43 portion of the paw of the cat is amputated to remove the claws of
44 the animal. The term includes, without limitation, procedures
45 commonly referred to as declawing.



1 (d) *“Phalangectomy” means the excision of one or more of the*
2 *phalanges of the paw of a cat.*

3 (e) *“Tendonectomy” means a procedure in which the tendons*
4 *to the limbs, paws or toes of a cat are cut or modified so that the*
5 *claws cannot be extended.*

6 **Sec. 2.** NRS 574.050 is hereby amended to read as follows:

7 574.050 As used in NRS 574.050 to 574.200, inclusive **[H]** ,
8 *and section 1 of this act:*

9 1. “Animal” does not include the human race, but includes
10 every other living creature.

11 2. “First responder” means a person who has successfully
12 completed the national standard course for first responders.

13 3. “Police animal” means an animal which is owned or used by
14 a state or local governmental agency and which is used by a peace
15 officer in performing his or her duties as a peace officer.

16 4. “Torture” or “cruelty” includes every act, omission or
17 neglect, whereby unjustifiable physical pain, suffering or death is
18 caused or permitted.

19 **Sec. 3.** NRS 574.200 is hereby amended to read as follows:

20 574.200 1. The provisions of NRS 574.050 to 574.510,
21 inclusive, *and section 1 of this act* do not:

22 (a) Interfere with any of the fish and game laws contained in
23 title 45 of NRS or any laws for the destruction of certain birds.

24 (b) Interfere with the right to destroy any venomous reptiles or
25 animals, or any animal known as dangerous to life, limb or property.

26 (c) Interfere with the right to kill all animals and fowl used for
27 food.

28 (d) Prohibit or interfere with any properly conducted scientific
29 experiments or investigations which are performed under the
30 authority of the faculty of some regularly incorporated medical
31 college or university of this State.

32 (e) Interfere with any scientific or physiological experiments
33 conducted or prosecuted for the advancement of science or
34 medicine.

35 (f) Prohibit or interfere with established methods of animal
36 husbandry, including the raising, handling, feeding, housing and
37 transporting of livestock or farm animals.

38 2. Nothing contained in subsection 1 shall be deemed to
39 exclude a research facility from the provisions of NRS 574.205.

40 **Sec. 4.** NRS 574.550 is hereby amended to read as follows:

41 574.550 1. Except as otherwise provided in subsections 2 and
42 3, a person who sells or attempts to sell, offers for adoption or
43 transfers ownership of a live animal at a swap meet is guilty of a
44 misdemeanor.



1 2. A person may sell, attempt to sell, offer for adoption or
2 transfer ownership of a live animal at a swap meet if:

3 (a) The swap meet is conducted in a county or incorporated city
4 in this State that has adopted an ordinance authorizing the sale of
5 live animals at a swap meet;

6 (b) The person sells, attempts to sell, offers for adoption or
7 transfers ownership of the animal in accordance with the ordinance;
8 and

9 (c) The ordinance, at a minimum:

10 (1) Includes provisions which are substantially similar to the
11 provisions of NRS 574.360 to 574.510, inclusive, and are applicable
12 to all animals offered for sale and all persons who sell, attempt to
13 sell, offer for adoption or transfer ownership of an animal at the
14 swap meet; and

15 (2) Does not authorize a person to commit an act of cruelty
16 to an animal in violation of NRS 574.050 to 574.200, inclusive **[H]**,
17 **and section 1 of this act.**

18 3. The provisions of this section do not:

19 (a) Apply to any sale or transfer of ownership of any livestock.

20 (b) Apply to any event where the primary purpose is to sell or
21 auction livestock or agricultural implements.

22 (c) Apply to any adoption of a dog or cat at an event held
23 outdoors by an animal shelter or rescue organization that is
24 recognized as exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal
25 Revenue Code, 26 U.S.C. § 501(c)(3).

26 (d) Apply to a person who offers for adoption or transfers
27 ownership of a live animal at a swap meet if:

28 (1) A fee is not charged or collected for the adoption or
29 transfer of ownership or otherwise in connection with the
30 transaction; and

31 (2) The animal has had all the required vaccinations which
32 are appropriate based upon the age of the animal.

33 (e) Exempt a person from complying with:

34 (1) Any requirement to obtain a license or other authorization
35 to engage in a business in a county or incorporated city in this State;
36 or

37 (2) Any other requirement of the county or incorporated city
38 to engage in business or to sell, attempt to sell, offer for adoption or
39 transfer ownership of a live animal at a swap meet.

40 4. As used in this section:

41 (a) "Livestock" has the meaning ascribed to it in NRS 569.0085.

42 (b) "Sell" means to barter, exchange, sell, trade, offer for sale,
43 expose for sale, have in possession for sale, arrange the sale of or
44 solicit for sale.



1 (c) "Swap meet" means a flea market, open-air market or other
2 organized event at which two or more persons offer merchandise for
3 sale or exchange.

4 **Sec. 5.** NRS 638.140 is hereby amended to read as follows:

5 638.140 The following acts, among others, are grounds for
6 disciplinary action:

7 1. Violation of a regulation adopted by the State Board of
8 Pharmacy or the Nevada State Board of Veterinary Medical
9 Examiners;

10 2. An alcohol or other substance use disorder;

11 3. Conviction of or a plea of nolo contendere to a felony related
12 to the practice of veterinary medicine, or any offense involving
13 moral turpitude;

14 4. Incompetence;

15 5. Negligence;

16 6. Malpractice pertaining to veterinary medicine as evidenced
17 by an action for malpractice in which the holder of a license is found
18 liable for damages;

19 7. Conviction of a violation of any law concerning the
20 possession, distribution or use of a controlled substance or a
21 dangerous drug as defined in chapter 454 of NRS;

22 8. Willful failure to comply with any provision of this chapter,
23 a regulation, subpoena or order of the Board, the standard of care
24 established by the American Veterinary Medical Association or an
25 order of a court;

26 9. Prescribing, administering or dispensing a controlled
27 substance to an animal to influence the outcome of a competitive
28 event in which the animal is a competitor;

29 10. Willful failure to comply with a request by the Board for
30 medical records within 14 days after receipt of a demand letter
31 issued by the Board;

32 11. Willful failure to accept service by mail or in person from
33 the Board;

34 12. Failure of a supervising veterinarian to provide immediate
35 or direct supervision to licensed or unlicensed personnel if the
36 failure results in malpractice or the death of an animal; ~~and~~

37 13. Failure of a supervising veterinarian to ensure that a
38 licensed veterinarian is on the premises of a facility or agency when
39 medical treatment is administered to an animal if the treatment
40 requires direct or immediate supervision by a licensed veterinarian

41 ~~and~~; and

42 *14. Violation of a provision of section 1 of this act.*

