From:	lorelei hickman
To:	Black, Kendra A. - CC City Council Elected; Brooks, Albus - CC City Council Elected; New, Wayne C. - CC City Council Elected; Gilmore, Stacie M. - CC City Council Elected; District 1 Comments; Flynn, Kevin J. - CC City Council Elected; Lopez, Paul D. - CC City Council Elected; Susman, Mary Elizabeth - CC City Council Elected; Kashmann, Paul J. - CC City Council Elected; Clark, Jolon M. - CC City Council Elected; Herndon, Christopher J. - CC City Council Elected; kniechatlarge; Deborah Ortega - Councilwoman At Large; dencc - City Council
Subject:	anti-declaw ordinance CB17-0709
Date:	Tuesday, October 24, 2017 2:41:44 PM

To All The Honorable Members of the Denver City Council:

My name is Lorelei Hickman. I'm currently a resident of Pueblo, Colorado, and I am writing to you in regard to Paw Project-Colorado Director Dr. Aubrey Lavizzo's presentation of proposed anti-declaw ordinance CB17-0709 at the City Council's Committee Hearing on Wednesday October 25 at 10:30 a.m. I am unable to attend the meeting in person, but must tell you:

I am a former veterinary technician who was fired from my last job at a feline vet hospital in Louisiana because I refused to stop giving information to our clients about the many potential risks and complications from declawing surgery which can negatively impact a cat's quality of life. I was told by my employer, "If you don't believe in declawing, you should be bagging groceries, not working in a veterinary hospital- not MY veterinary hospital". This is a verbatim quote. And this is why I strongly and wholeheartedly support bans on declawing cats- because unfortunately I have direct firsthand knowledge of the existence of unethical veterinarians who deliberately conspire to keep their clients in the dark or confused as to exactly what declawing cats entails. This same veterinarian (and his staff) would also encourage clients to violate contracts by blatantly lying to adoption agencies (such as the SPCA) which have specified "do not declaw" policies for adopted cats, telling them "don't say that you want to declaw the cat or they won't adopt to you". (Another verbatim quote).

It is a sad and troubling fact for pet owners that this man with his callous attitude is far from alone in the veterinary profession in the United States. Through social media I have heard stories from a number of other veterinary support staff members across the country who have also been fired (or threatened with being fired) simply because they are trying to do the right thing and give pet owners all the information they need to make a truly informed decision about whether or not they want to have their cat declawed. (Studies have shown that when presented with ALL the unsanitized facts, the majority of people choose NOT to have it done, and this has not been lost on the veterinarians who give out information as sparingly as possible "and ONLY if the client specifically asks for it".)

This is not only affecting cats, who nevertheless suffer greatly when they are declawed (it is, after all, the amputation of the last joint of every digit on the paw, which results in an altered gait and a greater risk of developing arthritis and many other painful musculoskeletal problems over time). It is also affecting their human caretakers, who are being financially victimized by these unethical professionals who deprive them of the opportunity for informed

consent. (Many declaw patients need frequent follow-up visits to address infections, lameness, behavior issues, and other problems post-surgery, and it becomes expensive.) It is also affecting the morale and productiveness of veterinary support staff members who find themselves in toxic workplaces due to this issue, and in some cases it is forcing them out of the profession, as in my own case.

As you may have heard (or may hear during Dr. Lavizzo's presentation), declawing cats has been banned in 8 cities in California, including Los Angeles, and animal shelter management in those cities have NOT reported an increase in cats relinquished to shelters after the declaw bans went into effect. This mutilating, usually medically unnecessary procedure (there are rare exceptions which generally only necessitate amputation of individual digits, NOT all of them) has also been banned as animal cruelty in most of the rest of the First World, with the U.S. and Canada being the only holdouts.

On behalf of all cats, all caring pet owners who (sometimes misguidedly) trust their veterinarians, and all veterinary staff members across the country who want to see their profession put an end to this hypocrisy, I ask you to please support ordinance CB17-0709 and help Denver to become a leader in compassion to animals and the people who love them. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
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