

ACLU successfully fights for right to free speech for famous internet cat

White Cloud, Michigan. May 12, 2018- An orange cat with thumbs from California got some big help from the ACLU recently in a first amendment case involving freedom of speech over the controversial declawing of cats.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan (ACLU) wrote an Amicus Brief in response to a Personal Protection Order (PPO) that was filed by the director of Newaygo, MI., Lake Haven Animal Shelter's Director, Cheryl McCloud, against Lori Shepler, owner of the famous internet cat, City the Kitty.

One of Lake Haven's declawing veterinarians, according to McCloud's lawyer in transcripts from the hearings, was the impetus for the filing of the PPO. Declawing is a billion dollar business in America and the American veterinary trade associations work hard to stop anti-declawing legislation.

Shepler was an award winning photojournalist at the Los Angeles Times for 25 years and now runs campaigns to ban declawing on social media through her celebrity feline City the Kitty. In November 2017, she shined light on the fact that McCloud takes hundreds of cats and kittens each year from shelters and has most of them declawed before she puts them up for adoption.

Declawing is an unethical and mutilating amputation procedure that is banned in 42 countries. It is also banned in eight cities in California and recently was banned in Denver, Nova Scotia, and British Columbia. There are currently anti-declawing bills in NY, NJ, RI, and WV.

A few of City the Kitty's followers were outraged by Lake Haven's declaw policy and expressed their opposition to it with inflammatory language to McCloud on social media.

Shepler, although accused in the PPO of bodily harm and death threats, never threatened McCloud or her associates and never asked City the Kitty's 364,000 followers on social media to attack or threaten McCloud.

Shepler says the majority of rescues and shelters in America speak out against declawing and educate the public about the simple, humane alternatives like sturdy scratching posts, nail trims, deterrents, Feliway, and Soft Paws. Many of them have a no-declaw clause in adoption contracts.

The ACLU's brief stated that this issuance of an injunction prohibiting speech was a clear violation of Ms. Shepler's and City the Kitty's right to free speech under the First Amendment. Advocacy against declawing is entitled to the highest rung of First Amendment protection.

The PPO was dismissed on May 7th, 2018.

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