

Chairman Joseph J. Solomon Jr.
House Committee on Corporations
Rhode Island General Assembly

Re: Opposition to House Bill #7334

Dear Chairman Solomon,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to House Bill #7334 and to share serious concerns regarding its unintended consequences. This legislation appears to target regulated, licensed businesses for issues that will not be resolved by banning the sale of captive-bred birds, while simultaneously harming responsible businesses that work diligently to provide healthy, humanely raised birds to families seeking companion animals.

Prohibiting the sale of birds from regulated and licensed entities does nothing to address the true problems of illegal wildlife trafficking or the abandonment of pets by their owners. In reviewing adoptable and previously adopted birds listed by the two bird rescue organizations advocating for this bill, it is notable that many of the species shown—such as cockatoos, macaws, lovebirds, and lorikeets—are not sold in our Rhode Island stores. Additionally, even among species that we do offer, many of the birds pictured are not properly banded in accordance with Rhode Island law, which requires closed leg bands for all birds sold, bartered, exchanged or given away. This strongly suggests these birds did not originate from our stores or other retailers that comply with state regulations.

This raises significant concerns about the black market that these birds are coming from. Birds obtained from unregulated sources expose adopters to serious risks, including unknown health histories, improper identification, and the potential spread of disease.

It is critical to emphasize that our birds are sourced exclusively from regulated breeders overseen by the USDA. They are veterinary-checked prior to entering the state of Rhode Island and are tested and cleared for serious avian illnesses such as psittacosis—a zoonotic respiratory bacterial infection—and psittacine beak and feather disease, an often fatal and highly contagious viral infection. These safeguards exist to protect consumers, captive-bred bird populations, and the animals entrusted to our care. Without this level of oversight, bird diseases are far more likely to go undetected, as is often the case in backyard breeding and unregulated situations involving any type of animal.

We also do not sell birds in any of our three Rhode Island stores that have extreme lifespans of 60–70 years. Beyond sourcing and health standards, we place a strong emphasis on education. We work diligently to ensure that every potential bird owner understands the responsibility and long-term commitment involved before bringing a bird into their home. Enclosed, you will find our New Bird Parent Guide and care information for

one of the species we offer—parakeets—which we provide to all prospective buyers. These materials reflect our commitment to education, responsible ownership, and ensuring our birds are placed in appropriate, informed homes.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to oppose House Bill #7334 and instead focus on solutions that address illegal wildlife trafficking and irresponsible breeding practices—without penalizing regulated, compliant businesses that prioritize animal welfare, public health, and consumer education.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Amanda Fredal, LVT
Director of Pet Care
Pet Supplies Plus

Fun Facts

Parakeets (*Melospittacus undulatus*) are the most popular bird in the United States.

The parakeet is monogamous. When they find a mate, they pair for life!

Male parakeets have blue ceres (the fleshy area above a bird's beak) while females have brown ceres; however, when they're younger, parakeets have a purple or lavender cere until they're about a year old.

- + When a parakeet is relaxed or happy, they grind their beaks.
- + We talk too! Parakeets are one of the most vocal pet birds that can learn to mimic the sounds around them.



Vet Approved

Our Care Guides are designed to assist in general knowledge and requirements for the care of your new family member. We strongly encourage further research and consultation with your veterinarian on the complete and proper care of any new pet.

For more information visit petsuppliesplus.com, cdc.gov/healthy pets or contact your veterinarian.

Always wash your hands before and after handling your pet or cleaning its habitat, and remember that any pet can scratch, bite or transmit disease to humans.

For pregnant women, persons with compromised immune systems, or if you have children under the age of 5, we strongly recommend contacting your physician prior to purchasing or caring for a new pet.

Please see the Centers for Disease Control website at www.cdc.gov/healthypets for more information.

Shopping Checklist

From housing to supplies, we have everything you need to make their first days the best.

- Bird cage (min. 18"L x 18"W x 18"H) with bar space no larger than $\frac{3}{8}$ " to $\frac{1}{2}$ "
- UVB bulb & hood
- Bedding for bottom of the cage
- Perches (at least 3 different types)
- Sturdy food/water dishes (at least 3)
- Variety of toys (at least 3 different types)
- Bird seed & pellet diet
- Treats such as millet spray
- Enrichment feeding toys
- Cuttlebone or calcium treats
- Bird bath
- Spray bottle

Show us your new family member!

@petsuppliesplus
#plusthecritters



Care Guide Parakeet



How to give your small pet their best life.



Pet Care Parakeet

- + **Life Span**
8+ years
- + **Average size**
7 inches, 30-40 grams
- + **Habitat Temperature**
65-80° F. To avoid temperature swings, do not place bird cages near vents or drafty windows.
- + **Normal Behavior**
As a flock-oriented animal, your parakeet would do well with having other birds in your home. They will see you and your family as part of their flock, so it's important to interact, handle and socialize with your bird frequently to keep them happy.
- + **Diet**
Parakeets need a good-quality, pellet-based diet with a mix of seeds, vegetables, fruits and grains. We recommend a 60% pellet/20% seed/20% fresh food combination.
- + **Supplements**
Parakeets need calcium which can come from cuttlebone or calcium treats.

+ **Water**

Make fresh, chlorine-free water available at all times. Parakeets often bathe in and drink from the same place, so changing the water multiple times a day may be necessary.

+ **Housing & Environment**

A single bird should have a cage no smaller than 18"L x 18"W x 18"H. Two birds should have a cage measuring at least 28"L x 24"W x 36"H. If natural sunlight is unavailable, you need to expose your bird to UVB light for at least 3-4 hours per day.

+ **Enrichment**

To prevent boredom and stress, put three different types of appropriately sized bird toys in their cage. Rotate other toys in and out, making sure they always have three to play with.

+ **Habitat Maintenance**

Their cage should be spot cleaned daily for any feces and spoiled food. The entire cage should be thoroughly cleaned at least twice a month.

+ **Grooming & Hygiene**

Gently mist your bird with a spray bottle dedicated to misting them. Spray up and over the bird to replicate a fine rain. NEVER spray the bird directly in the face. A room-temperature birdbath should also be offered to your bird at least twice a week.

Socializing & Handling

- + When you first bring your bird home, give them at least 24 hours to get used to their new habitat before handling them.
- + Try feeding your pet by hand. By creating a positive association with food, they'll be less afraid when you reach into their habitat.
- + To hold your bird, let them step onto your hand or pick them up placing your hand over their wings and back. To avoid injuries, never pick a bird up by its chest.
- + At the beginning, keep socializing sessions brief. Move slowly and quietly when handling your pet. Loud sounds and sudden movements may frighten them.
- + If they're struggling with being held, try using a towel or blanket to secure them as they get used to being handled by you. This'll also help prevent jumping or escaping.



NEW BIRD PARENT

Setting up for success with your new Bird

| | |
|--|--|
|  <p>On the Way Home</p> | <p>Fight the urge to take them out of the box on the way home. We know they're cute, but we want them to get to their new home as stress-free as possible.</p> |
|  <p>Establish a Safe Zone</p> | <p>Your new pet, needs their own comfortable space to decompress when you first bring them home. Pick a place for their habitat in a quiet, low traffic, temperature-controlled area, away from any dogs, cats or things that may bother them while they acclimate to their new home.</p> |
|  <p>New Home Introduction</p> | <p>A new home can be scary, right? Ideally you want your pet's habitat set up and ready to go before you bring home your new pet. Place the box inside of the enclosure and allow them to come out on their own. Make sure they have places to hide so they feel safe; Feeling safe makes it easier for them to "come out of their shell".</p> |
|  <p>Consider a Schedule</p> | <p>Almost any new pet could benefit from a consistent schedule with feeding and lighting. So, think about when their "nighttime" is (it's not always at night) and make sure to turn on and off the lights when they need.</p> |
|  <p>Keep a Watchful Eye</p> | <p>It's very important, to monitor and make sure that your pet is eating, drinking, and using the restroom regularly. Watch for signs of distress and establish a vet in case of emergencies (not all vet will see birds)!</p> |
|  <p>Safe Cleaning Tips</p> | <p>To ensure the safety of your bird, it's important to know what cleaning agents can and can't be used when disinfecting enclosures. Be sure to always remove the animal from the enclosure before you begin any cleaning.</p> <p>Some safe cleaning agents include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distilled vinegar – diluted with water at a ratio of 1:4 • Dawn dish soap • Hydrogen peroxide 3% |
|  <p>Transitioning to a New Diet</p> | <p>As a bird owner, you may find that changing your pet bird's diet is necessary for several different reasons. From your bird no longer showing interest in their current type of food, to food recipes changing, to financial or even health-related issues. Whatever your reasons may be, keep this guide handy when switching from one type of food to another to ensure success and keep your feathered friend healthy and happy.</p> <p>When converting a pet bird to a food that is completely different from the food normally fed, (for example a seed diet to a pellet diet), a slower conversion is optimal. Small birds, such as parakeets, canaries and finches may not recognize a pellet diet as a food, therefore refusing to eat. Always weigh your bird prior to starting the diet change and continuously throughout the process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First 7 days -- 75% old food and 25% new food • Days 8-14 – 50% old food and 50% new food • Days 15-21 – 25% old food and 75% new food • Days 22-28+ – New food and sprinkles of old food if necessary |
|  <p>Handling and Socializing</p> | <p>It's a good idea to allow a few days to decompress before trying to start handling. Short sessions of handling will help to get them used to you. Sudden movements can be scary so take it slow and let them come to you. Birds greatly benefit from hearing your voice so communicate! Slowly adding in more toys may help to keep them from being overwhelmed at first. If this is a companion animal for another pet, it's best to keep them separate initially and slowly introduce them to each other after they are used to their new home.</p> |
|  <p>Foods to Avoid</p> | <p>Avocado, Caffeine, Chocolate, Dairy, Onions, Garlic, Salt, Excessive Fats, Fruits containing seeds or pits, Alcohol, Mushrooms, Tomato leaves, Dried Beans and Xylitol (artificial sweetener found in sugarless gum and many "diet" foods).</p> |
|  <p>Household Hazards</p> | <p>Lead, Zinc, Copper, Polytetrafluoroethylene (commonly found in non stick cooking pans), Smoke, Fumes (anything from paint, scented candles, cleaning products to cooking fumes, Electrical cords, and Aerosol Sprays).</p> |
|  <p>Veterinary Care</p> | <p>Not all Veterinary Clinics treat birds, so it's important to establish one that does. We can recommend one that sees birds in the neighborhood or you can check the AAV website to find an exotic mammal vet near you at https://www.aav.org.</p> |