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From: Nicole Kosmopoulos <nicolekosmopoulos@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 11, 2026 7:03 AM
To: House Corporations Committee
Subject: H7334

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Dear House Corporations Members,

Please support H7334, which would ban the sale of parrots at pet stores. When the largest avian rescue in the Northeast can only manage about 15% of the surrender requests they receive in a year, it is obvious the current way of selling birds is not working. A pet store ban is critical in reducing the overwhelming number of unwanted birds. Pet industry surveys estimate that about 60% of people purchase their birds from pet stores. When considering some birds are gifted or rehomed, but originally purchased from a pet store, that percentage is even higher. Pet stores typically get their birds from breeding mills and because they are structured more like factories, birds regularly endure abuse and cruelty at these facilities. As a recent undercover investigation released by World Animal Protection shows, these are miserable places and when people buy from pet stores, they unknowingly support these large scale breeders.

Right now pet stores are operating with little to no oversight. Since they are excluded from the Animal Welfare Act, they are only required to have an inspection to receive their license. After a license is issued, it is left up to the public to request inspections, but even if someone files a complaint, not much can be done. There are no specific care guidelines for birds in Rhode Island laws, which means there are no meaningful guidelines for diet, enrichment, or enclosures. Birds are kept in terrible conditions at pet stores and it is perfectly legal.

In Rhode Island, all animal care facilities must be licensed with the Department of Environmental Management so not allowing pet stores to sell birds will not move the sale of birds to the black market. Shelters have to follow care guidelines just like pet stores, which means they are a regulated source for birds. What sets shelters apart from pet stores in Rhode Island is that they do not settle for the bare minimum. They ensure parrots are fed a balanced diet, housed in enclosures with multiple toys and perches and receive the medical care they need to stay healthy. Shelters also take their time pairing pet owners and birds, even offering support after adoption. Comparatively, most pet stores only have a two week return policy and do nothing to help after the transaction is completed.

Volunteering at Foster Parrots I have seen things that should make anyone rethink what it means to buy rather than adopt. Parrots shutting down and losing their trust in people after being repeatedly disappointed, passed from one home to another for being too messy, making too much noise, or for being too needy. Parrots coming into the sanctuary, starved for attention after being perpetually confined to dirty cages, their feet atrophied and misshapen from spending most of their time on the one and only perch they were provided. All because people did not know how to care for them or became fearful of a pet that bites too much. I have seen the horrible scars parrots bear from self mutilation and the permanent damage done from infections that were not treated by their owners.

Parrots are built for flight and do not readily adapt to captivity. There is nothing easy about meeting the needs of a parrot kept as a pet. They are built for life in a flock, flying miles a day and socializing with other birds. This is clearly not something that can be reproduced in captivity. Prone to serious health issues from lack of exercise and socialization, parrots require regular veterinary care, but if the intake forms at shelters are any indication, that care is typically not provided. According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, it is estimated that only about 12% of owners take their parrots for a medical exam within their lifetime. If pet stores were truly preparing pet owners, this percentage would be much higher.

No one should be walking out of a pet store knowing next to nothing about their new pet. We can not leave birds at the mercy of a pet industry that only promotes responsible pet ownership and exemplary care in words and not practice. We have a real chance to give parrots the protections they deserve. With this bill, pet stores will no longer be allowed to act as a shield for breeding facilities and impulsive purchases will be discouraged. Rhode Island can be at the forefront of much needed change for how we treat parrots in captivity. Thank you for your consideration of this bill.

Sincerely,

Nicole Martinez