

Testimony in Opposition to HB 7334

Relating to Animals and Animal Husbandry – Psittacine Birds

Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

My name is Renee Ducharme. I am the owner of Jungle Junction in Cumberland, Rhode Island. I have been a small business owner in this state for 37 years and currently employ three other Rhode Islanders.

I rise in opposition to HB 7334.

This bill would ban pet stores from selling parrots obtained from breeders or brokers, while allowing sales only if the birds come from animal care facilities or rescue organizations. It would also prohibit the sale of parrots at outdoor markets or public areas and impose civil fines for violations.

At first glance, this may appear to be consumer protection or animal welfare measures. In practice, however, it unfairly targets responsible, regulated small businesses like mine.

Reputable pet stores such as mine do not source birds randomly or irresponsibly. We work with breeders who are subject to federal and state oversight. These breeders operate under standards for housing, nutrition, veterinary care, and transport. When birds arrive at my store, they receive continued care, socialization, and customer education before placement into permanent homes.

By prohibiting sales from breeders, this bill effectively eliminates a transparent, regulated supply chain and replaces it with a limited and inconsistent rescue-only model.

Rescue organizations play a significant role — and we support them — but they cannot meet the full demand for companion parrots and continue to bring in birds into the rescues from outside of Rhode Island. Rescues charge fees for the adoptions as shown in one of the rescues fee schedules on their website. It should note that there is a fee to adopt a quaker parrot listed, this is a bird that is banned in Rhode Island. This restriction will not eliminate demand. It will push consumers toward unregulated online sellers, out-of-state transactions, or private sales with little to no oversight.

That outcome undermines animal welfare rather than strengthening it.

Additionally, this bill singles out psittacine birds without addressing comparable sales in other sectors. It creates a narrow prohibition that disproportionately impacts small, family-owned businesses while leaving large online marketplaces and private sellers untouched.

For a specialty pet retailer like mine, parrots are not an impulse item. They are placed into homes through informed conversations, education, and long-term support. We guide customers through diet, enrichment, lifespan expectations, and veterinary needs. That level of education does not occur in anonymous online sales but in person in our brick-and-mortar storefronts.

After 37 years in business, I can tell you that responsible local retailers are part of the solution — not the problem. As a certified avian expert, I have dedicated my entire life to our feathered companion's health and happiness as well as helping Rhode Island families to make memories with young children to elder adults, by helping ensure proper care and education.

We often have families with children looking for a small parakeet, budgie, or other smaller bird as a family pet, which builds memories of the first pet in the household. Elders on the other hand can often have a parakeet or cockatiel as a companion in their living situation and can focus care on a bird rather than a puppy or dog that requires more physical effort to properly care for.

If the goal is to improve animal welfare, then we should discuss enhanced standards, breeder transparency, inspection requirements, or consumer education — not an outright ban that removes ethical, regulated businesses from the marketplace.

I respectfully ask this committee to oppose HB 7334 and instead work collaboratively with experienced small business owners to craft balanced policy that protects animals, consumers, and Rhode Island businesses.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Renee I. Ducharme

Owner,

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ECONOMY

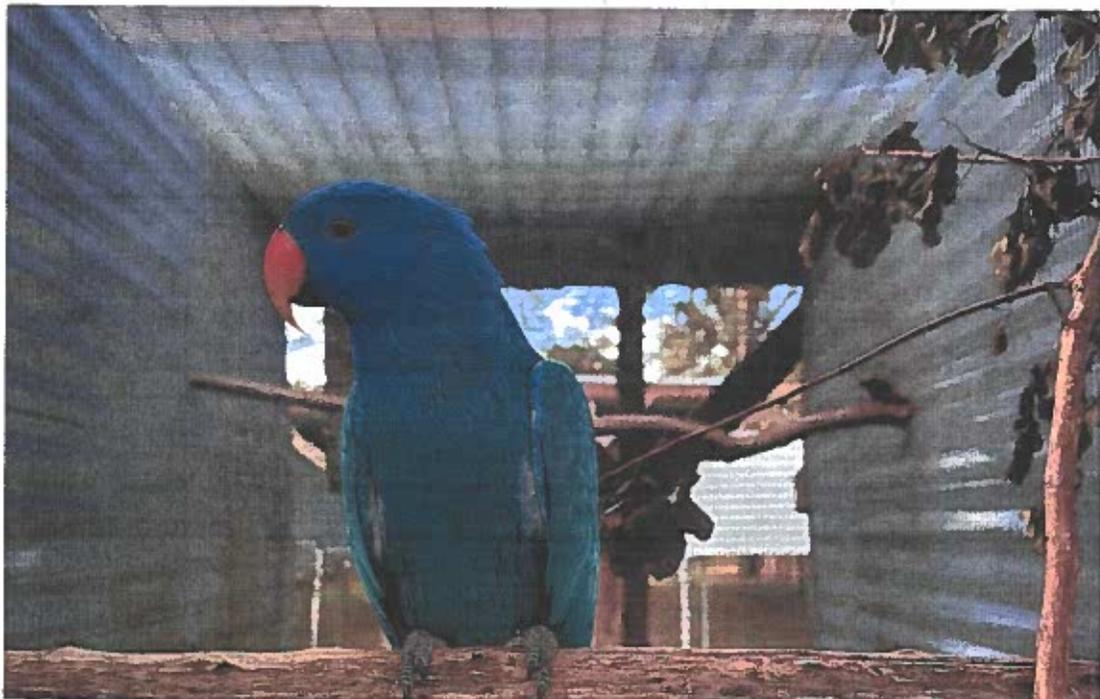
COMMENTARY

RI lawmakers, please don't cage ethical birdkeeping

Exeter rep's bill to ban pet stores from selling psittacine birds unfairly vilifies local businesses that follow the rules

MARK HAGEN, M.A.G.

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📷 Licensed breeders who follow rigorous standards under federal law ensure that birds like this blue Eclectus parrot are bred and sold ethically. (Photo courtesy of Pet Advocacy Network)

The intelligent gaze of a parrot, mimicking a favorite phrase. The vibrant emerald feathers of a parakeet. The cheerful chatter of lovebirds. These beloved companions could soon vanish from Rhode Island homes if lawmakers pass [House Bill 7334](#) – a well-intentioned but deeply misguided piece of legislation that threatens to unravel decades of progress in ethical avian care.

As someone who has dedicated 37 years to researching aviculture, captive breeding, and avian nutrition, I've witnessed remarkable advancements in how we raise, care for, and understand companion birds. Yet, this legislation threatens to dismantle this progress in one sweeping stroke.

The bill sponsored by Rep. Megan Cotter, an Exeter Democrat, has a [hearing](#) scheduled Wednesday before the House Committee on Corporations. The committee held a similar measure for further study last year. On the surface, the bill sounds noble: prohibit pet stores from selling psittacine birds – parrots, parakeets, lovebirds, and over 400 other species – from breeders and brokers. But scratch beneath the surface, and the law’s logic simply doesn’t fly.

Notably, these birds aren’t being plucked from the wild. They are purpose-bred by licensed breeders who follow rigorous standards under the Animal Welfare Act (AWA). These breeders are not the bad eggs; they’re the reason we’ve made such strides in avian welfare.

HR 7334 ignores the success of purpose-

HB 7334 ignores the success of purpose bred birds from ethical breeders who prioritize health and socialization. These birds thrive in homes due to decades of advancements in nutrition, husbandry, and genetic management. The regulated channels ensure birds receive proper socialization, nutrition, and health screenings before joining a family.

Prohibiting pet stores from procuring the birds from ethical breeders and brokers effectively eliminates the most transparent, accountable pathway for these precious birds to have loving homes.

What happens if we eliminate this regulated supply chain? The demand doesn't disappear. It would simply drive Rhode Islanders to sketchy sources, where oversight is nonexistent and the risks for birds and their owners are sky-high.

Without regulated supply chains, bird lovers will be forced to flock to unlicensed online sellers, black-market dealers, and direct importers who operate without oversight or accountability. The birds suffer, emerging diseases go undetected, and consumers lose protections.

Beyond harming birds and consumers, HB 7334 delivers a significant blow to

conservation education by prohibiting public exhibitions and educational displays of parrot species.

These exhibits inspire children to become tomorrow's conservationists and foster appreciation for birds' critical ecological roles. As a researcher at the Hagen Avicultural Research Institute, I've seen countless faces, both young and old, light up with wonder at these encounters – moments that spark lifelong passion for wildlife protection.

Cotter's bill has an exemption to allow stores to host adoption events put on by bird rescues. This might sound reasonable, but it would be impractical in reality. Rescues often have limited capacity and inventory, leaving stores with no birds to sell and families with no legitimate way to acquire a companion bird.



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pathway for these precious birds to have loving homes.

Local businesses, from pet store owners to feed suppliers, will also face devastating economic impacts. Many businesses have invested heavily in animal welfare protocols and regulatory compliance, provide warranties, veterinary referrals, and lifelong support to bird owners. Now, the stores are being unfairly vilified despite their commitment to ethical practices.

If Rhode Island truly wants to protect birds, the answer isn't to ban legitimate, regulated channels. Rather, the solution is to strengthen enforcement against unlicensed breeding and illegal trade. Transparency and education should be supported, not eliminated, as this bill threatens to do.

Let's respect the deep bonds that can form between these remarkable creatures and the humans who care for them. Birds bring color, joy, and companionship to thousands of Rhode Island homes. They deserve real protections – not policies that are more fowl than fair.

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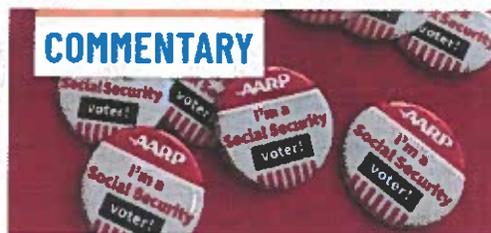
Mark Hagen, M.Ag. is director of research at Rolf C. Hagen Inc. and the Hagen Avicultural Research Institute with over 37 years of scientific expertise in aviculture, breeding, and avian nutrition.

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Fees



X-SMALL

- Exotic finches (Gouldian, Owl, Java, Star) \$25
- Budgies \$30
- Lovebirds \$75
- Parrotlets \$75
- Cockatiels \$175



SMALL

- Conures \$500
- Small Poicephalus (Senegal, Myer's) \$800
- Caiques \$700
- Quakers \$450
- Cape Parrot \$900



LORIKEETS

- Scaly breasted \$150
- Stella \$300
- Rainbow \$275
- Duyvenbode \$600
- Green Nape \$300
- Black capped \$400



<https://www.riparrots.org/current-fees>



MEDIUM

- Psittacula (Ringneck, Alexandrine, etc.) \$600
- Pionus \$750
- Amazon \$850
- Specialty Amazon \$900
- Eclectus \$900
- Small Macaws (Hahn) \$700
- Goffins cockatoos \$900
- Medium Macaws (Severe, Yellow Collared) \$700
- Red Fronted Macaw \$900
- African Grey \$1,500

Sulfur-Crested) \$800 - \$900

- Moluccan \$1100
- Galah cockatoo \$1300
- Blue and Gold Macaw \$1300
- Greenwing Macaw \$1500
- Military Macaw \$1300 *RI residents only, permit required*
- Scarlet Macaw \$1500 *RI residents only, permit required*
- Hybrid Macaws (Catalina, Harlequin, Flame, Camelot) \$1,500
- Hyacinths (*Contact us for pricing*)

OTHER

Our Adoption Coordinators will make a decision on a case-by-case basis with the following types of birds: aggressive birds, special needs birds, senior birds, and birds with chronic medical conditions.

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