

Opposition Testimony to House Bill 7334
Relating to Animals and Animal Husbandry — Psittacine Birds
Submitted by: **Jungle Junction**
Founded 1989 – Rhode Island Small Family Business

Chairperson and Members of the House Corporations Committee:

On behalf of **Jungle Junction**, a Rhode Island small family business established in 1989, I respectfully submit this testimony in opposition to House Bill 7334.

For more than three decades, Jungle Junction has responsibly provided hand-fed baby parrots to families throughout Rhode Island and New England. We are proud to employ Rhode Island taxpayers, contribute to the local economy, and operate under long-standing, reputable business practices.

We respectfully object to H 7334 for the following reasons:

• **Direct Elimination of a Longstanding Rhode Island Small Business Model**

- Section 4-11-14(b)(1) makes it unlawful for a pet store to sell or offer for sale a parrot procured from a breeder or broker.
- Jungle Junction operates lawfully, transparently, and responsibly in partnership with breeders.
- This provision effectively eliminates our ability to conduct our core business after the one-year grace period.
- The bill does not regulate standards — it prohibits an entire category of lawful commerce.

• **Creation of a De Facto Monopoly for Rescue Organizations**

- While pet stores are prohibited from selling parrots from breeders, they may host adoption events sourced exclusively from:
 - Animal care facilities
 - Animal rescue organizations
- This structure:
 - Restricts lawful commerce to a limited class of organizations

- Eliminates competition from established small businesses
- Grants exclusive market access to nonprofit rescues
- Section (f) further compounds this issue by naming specific rescue entities (Foster Parrots, Ltd. and Rhode Island Parrot Rescue) as advisory participants in implementation.
 - This creates the appearance of preferential treatment.
 - It allows market competitors to influence the compliance process of private businesses.
 - It effectively positions certain rescues as gatekeepers in the Rhode Island parrot market.

Limiting adoptions to rescues does not eliminate sales — it simply shifts them to a protected channel.

An “adoption fee” remains a financial transaction. This bill restructures who may participate in commerce rather than whether commerce occurs, and eliminates support to the State sales tax in these transactions with a tax exempt adoption fee.

• **Restriction of Fair Trade and Interstate Commerce**

- Families seeking a hand-fed baby parrot will not stop seeking them.
- Instead, Rhode Island residents will:
 - Travel out of state to purchase birds.
 - Complete transactions online with out-of-state sellers.
- This results in:
 - Loss of Rhode Island sales tax revenue.
 - Loss of associated purchases (supplies, feed, veterinary referrals).
 - Economic harm to in-state employers.
- H 7334 effectively exports lawful commerce out of Rhode Island.

• **Economic Impact on Rhode Island Workers**

Jungle Junction:

- Employs Rhode Island residents.
- Pays Rhode Island taxes.
- Supports local vendors and service providers.
- Has operated continuously since 1989.

This bill would:

- Reduce or eliminate jobs.
- Undermine a 35+ year family-owned enterprise.
- Penalize responsible operators without evidence of misconduct.

• **Lack of Distinction Between Responsible Breeders and Bad Actors**

- The bill does not target:
 - Substandard breeding practices.
 - Animal welfare violations.
 - Improper sourcing.
- Instead, it imposes a blanket prohibition.
- Reputable breeders who comply with USDA standards and humane practices are treated the same as bad actors.
- Responsible, transparent businesses are eliminated alongside any problematic operators.

If reform is needed, targeted regulation would be more appropriate than categorical prohibition.

• **Inconsistent Treatment of Birds Versus Other Animals**

- The bill singles out parrots while allowing continued sales of other non-agricultural birds.

- The definition of “agricultural use” excludes parrots categorically, regardless of responsible husbandry.
 - This selective restriction lacks a clear economic or welfare-based justification.
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• **Unintended Consequences**

By eliminating regulated in-state retail sales, the bill may:

- Drive consumers to less transparent online transactions.
- Reduce oversight and accountability.
- Encourage informal, unregulated transfers.
- Decrease consumer protections that established businesses provide.

Local brick-and-mortar businesses offer:

- Education on parrot care.
 - Ongoing support.
 - Accountability and traceability.
 - Proper socialization and early handling practices.
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• **Contract Provisions and Deposit Restrictions (Section d)**

- Automatic voiding of contracts that include nonrefundable deposits creates:
 - Financial uncertainty for small businesses.
 - Exposure to litigation risk.
 - Deposits are standard practice in animal husbandry due to:
 - Care costs.
 - Housing commitments.
 - Individualized hand-feeding schedules.
 - This provision disproportionately burdens small operators.
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• **A 35-Year Record of Responsible Practice**

Since 1989, Jungle Junction has:

- Provided hand-fed, well-socialized baby parrots to generations of families.
- Built a strong reputation throughout New England.
- Operated with integrity and transparency.
- Maintained long-term relationships with customers and avian professionals.

We are not a transient broker. We are a Rhode Island family business with deep community roots.

Conclusion

House Bill 7334 does not merely regulate; it eliminates a lawful, reputable Rhode Island business model and transfers market access to a limited class of organizations.

It:

- Creates a monopoly structure for rescues.
- Forces commerce out of state.
- Harms Rhode Island workers.
- Penalizes responsible operators.
- Restricts fair trade within our state.

We respectfully urge the Committee to:

- Oppose H 7334 as written, or
- Consider amendments that regulate standards rather than prohibit lawful small business operations.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service to the people and small businesses of Rhode Island.

Respectfully submitted,

Walter R. Ducharme

Established 1989