

Testimony in support of House Bill 7222, House Committee on Municipal Government and Housing February 26, 2026, by Peter Trafton, Providence, RI

Dear Chair Casey and Honorable Committee Members,

I write with the strongest possible support of Representative Kislak's bill 7222, entitled Pesticide Control, specifically devoted to sparing the lives of raptors - birds of prey like owls, hawks, and eagles.

The problem is that we are attempting to control the population of rats in our cities and towns by killing them with rat poisons that are anticoagulants. These are agents, often referred to as "blood thinners," like Coumadin or warfarin, that are used medically in much smaller doses. Raptors are natural enemies of rodents. They capture and eat hundreds of them each year. Rats who might be slowed down by internal bleeding may be easier to catch. But in any rate, the amount of anticoagulant rodenticide in 1 or 2 rats is often enough to kill the raptor who catches and eats that rat. One result is that there are fewer raptors to control rodent populations. And plenty of rats remain, since raptors kill more rats than rodenticides do! In addition, there are other drugs that are safer, and work better. If those or non-drug techniques are used, the raptors are spared.

Growing up in New England, I never saw an American Eagle until I moved to the West Coast. Now they are frequently observed, even here in Rhode Island. Please help them stay alive by passing H7222.

This bill restricts sales and use of rodenticides, particularly the 2nd generation variety which are more of a threat to the birds.

Importantly, the bill provides guidance for a temporary integrated pest management pilot program that will help cities and towns develop an organized and monitored plan for controlling rat populations. Using and teaching successful rodent reduction measures should help us control the rats while providing a safer environment for our birds.

Thanks for considering my input. Please help us pass this bill.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "PG Trafton". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized.

Peter Trafton