



Monday, March 25, 2024

Representative Joseph J. Solomon, Jr, Chair
Representative William W. O'Brien, First Vice Chair
Representative Justine A. Caldwell, Second Vice Chair
And Members of the House Corporations Committee

Re: Opposition to H 7946

Dear Chair Solomon, First Vice Chair O'Brien, Second Vice Chair Caldwell and Members of the Committee,

The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS), on behalf of our thousands of supporters across Rhode Island, write in opposition to H 7946. We applaud the Rhode Island General Assembly for enacting cage-free legislation in 2018, and we urge you to keep the 2026 effective date as it was passed.

On some egg factory farms, hens are crammed into cages so small the birds can't spread their wings. Each bird is given less space than the dimensions of an iPad on which to live her entire life. She's forced to eat, sleep, and defecate in the same space and is denied almost everything that is natural to her. These conditions are cruel to the animals and increase the spread of diseases, like Salmonella, which can then sicken people. Extensive research shows that locking hens in cages increases the risk of Salmonella contamination, a bacteria that can be lethal, especially in children and the elderly.

Due to these concerns, Rhode Island's cage-free law was passed six years ago. It provided a farmer-friendly timeline of eight years for producers to come into compliance. Producers have been on notice since 2018 that this law was coming into effect.

Rhode Island's cage-free egg law implementation date is in line with laws enacted in other states. Over the past several years, red, blue and purple states have passed cage-free measures like Rhode Island's law. States like California, Colorado, Oregon, Washington, Nevada, Michigan, Massachusetts, Utah, and Arizona have all enacted cage-free standards with similar implementation dates. Indeed, Rhode Island's cage-free law implementation date was the most generous of all of the states with cage-free measures.

A leading agribusiness magazine has concluded, "It's no longer a discussion about whether to convert egg production from cage to cage-free operations, but rather when it will happen." The nation's leading grocery, restaurant and packaged food companies are requiring their contracted egg companies to switch to cage-free. More than 200 of the country's largest food companies have committed to switching to a 100 percent cage-free egg supply. This includes Burger King, Unilever, General Mills, Aramark, Costco, and Target. In February, McDonald's,



which purchases roughly 2 billion eggs annually, announced that 100% of eggs served at all of its U.S. locations come from cage-free birds.

For these reasons, we kindly urge you to vote no on H 7946. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink on a light blue rectangular background. The signature appears to read "Kate Brindle".

Kate Brindle,
Program Manager, Public and Corporate Policy, Farm Animal Protection