

February 4, 2025

RE: House Bill 5214

Dear Chairman Solomon and members of the Rhode Island Corporations Committee,

As the advocacy voice of the responsible pet care community, the Pet Advocacy Network represents the interests and expertise of retailers, companion animal suppliers, manufacturers, distributors, pet owners, and others involved in the many aspects of pet care across the United States. Our association promotes animal well-being and responsible pet ownership, fosters environmental stewardship, and ensures healthy pets' availability through our local, state, and federal work. In addition, we routinely advocate for legislative and regulatory proposals to protect the health, safety, and availability of companion animals.

On behalf of the responsible pet care community, **we ask that you vote NO on House Bill 5214 which would ban the sale of parrots at pet stores from a breeder or broker.**

This misguided bill will not do anything to improve animal welfare. It will punish law-abiding local pet stores and bird breeders by eliminating a transparent source that provides consumer protections and drive prospective pet owners to unscrupulous black-market sellers and scammers. Rhode Island's pet stores are highly regulated, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) regulates bird breeders. This bill would ban these highly regulated pet stores and would likely force these businesses, many who have been in their communities for decades, to close.

This bill would ban more than 350 species of birds, including many of the most popular birds like parakeets and lovebirds. These birds provide companionship and make excellent pets, and almost all of them are purpose-bred by professional, regulated breeders. Pet stores are a trusted source for these birds, providing educational materials, guidance, and support in addition to the products necessary to care for them properly.

These stores work with families to find the ideal pet for their situation to ensure a successful, lifelong pet relationship and prevent these birds from being surrendered to shelters and rescues. These local businesses are dedicated to the health, safety, and well-being of the animals they provide for families.

HB 5214 also paints all bird breeders and pet shops as being guilty of animal cruelty. Not only is this untrue, Rhode Island already has laws in place that are enforced in cases of animal cruelty. In fact, these stores are invested in providing the highest quality care to the animals they sell.

This bill also bans the display of these birds for exhibitions and educational purposes. By allowing the public to safely interact with these birds, people are given the chance to learn about them and the crucial role they have in our ecosystem. Taking away this access would deprive Rhode Islanders of opportunities to learn firsthand how important these birds are to our planet.



We ask that you vote NO on this bill and instead, let's work together to find ways to strengthen protections for birds, consumers, and the local businesses in the Ocean State.

Thank you for your consideration,

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