

**Subject:** Testimony in Support of SB806 – Advocating for Maryland's Health and Ethical Standards

Dear Chair Feldman and Vice Chair Cheryl C. Kagan, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Fawaz Joseph, a resident of Maryland, and I am writing to express my strong support for SB806, which seeks to ban the sale of eggs from hens confined in battery cages. This legislation is pivotal for safeguarding the health, and ethical standards of Maryland.

## **Public Health Concerns**

Battery cages, which confine hens to spaces smaller than a sheet of letter-sized paper, not only subject animals to inhumane conditions but also pose significant health risks to consumers. Studies have indicated that eggs from such environments have a higher likelihood of Salmonella contamination, jeopardizing the well-being of Maryland families. Additionally, the extreme confinement of battery cages creates ideal conditions for the spread of bird flu, a serious public health concern that has caused numerous outbreaks in recent years. These confined conditions lead to higher rates of contamination with foodborne pathogens and increase the risk of disease transmission, affecting our entire community's food safety.

## **Reflecting Maryland's Ethical Values**

This bill also reflects the values of Marylanders. People care about where their food comes from, and polling consistently shows that consumers overwhelmingly support more humane farming practices. Our state prides itself on upholding ethical standards and compassion. The extreme confinement of hens in battery cages, which prevents them from engaging in natural behaviors such as nesting and perching, go against these values. Transitioning to cage-free systems allows hens to move freely and express natural behaviors, aligning our food production practices with the ethical expectations of Maryland consumers.

In conclusion, SB806 is not merely a legislative proposal but a commitment to the health and ethical standards of Maryland. I urge you to vote favorably on this bill, reflecting the values and interests of Maryland..

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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