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Support of HB0834

As a resident of Maryland, I would like to express my support for HB0834. This would require that all eggs sold or produced in Maryland come from cage-free systems. Battery cages are very sadistic, and are associated with food safety risks. Cage-free systems would mitigate these problems.

The conditions for chickens in battery cages are horrendous. The amount of space that each chicken has to herself is less than that of a sheet of paper. The chickens cannot walk, nor fully extend their wings and necks. Due to the lack of movement, as many as 89 percent develop osteoporosis, a painful condition. Additionally, the wire floor of the cages often causes the chickens to develop hyperkeratosis, a thickening of the pads on the bottom of their feet. This can lead to open sores, as well as painful inflammation. These are only a few of the horrific conditions that caged chickens must endure.

Food Safety is also a concern. Years of research show that confinement in cages increases the risk of Salmonella contamination.

In closing, battery cages clearly cause chickens to suffer extensively, and they increase food safety risks. As many as 11 states have passed legislation that bans battery cages, or requires them to be phased out. I urge you to pass HB0834. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.