

Testimony for HB0834 - Michele Waldman

February 19, 2025

My name is Michele Waldman. I am a mom, licensed Psychotherapist, and the Founder and President of Rosie's Farm Sanctuary, a 501(c)(3) animal sanctuary in Potomac. Each year, Rosie's Farm provides educational tours to hundreds of people in our community and hosts dozens of high school interns. We have 35,000 followers and reach millions through social media.

At our sanctuary, we care for many types of farmed animals, including egg-laying hens, and I am fortunate to spend time with them every day. I am here in support of HB0834 because it presents a viable and more humane alternative to current practices. Quite frankly, it is the bare minimum we should provide these gentle creatures.

If you've ever spent time with hens, you know they are full of personality. Hens are highly intelligent, affectionate, and social. My girls chatter to each other all day while foraging and exploring. Just yesterday, I watched one of my hens, Marilyn Monroe, admiring herself in a mirror. She kept stepping up, tilting her head, chirping, then glancing back at her flock before returning to the mirror—chirping sweetly as if declaring herself the fairest of them all.

Like all birds, my girls love to stretch and flap their wings. They form deep friendships—both with each other and with humans. They recognize over a hundred faces. When Marilyn sees me, she comes running, hoping for treats and a warm lap. In so many ways, she is no different than my golden retrievers.

Cage confinement is cruel. It inflicts severe stress on hens, weakens their immune systems, and makes them more vulnerable to disease. The thought of a bird spending her entire life crammed inside a battery cage is unimaginable, inhumane, and unnecessary.

Each of my hens has a unique personality. But don't just take my word for it—come meet them yourselves. I invite all of you, along with your staff and families, to visit Rosie's Farm Sanctuary and see firsthand the incredible beings we are discussing today.

Thank you for your time and consideration.