Humane World for Animals™

Formerly called the Humane Society of the United States and Humane Society International

Support cage-free legislation in Maryland



Marylanders deserve safer, affordable, more humane eggs

Due to enormous public opposition to confining farm animals in ultra-restrictive cages, it's now clear that the future of egg production is cage-free. Cage-free legislation would ensure that, after a phase-in period, eggs produced or sold in Maryland come from cage-free operations that adhere to the egg industry's own guidelines. A cage-free law would promote food safety, reduce animal suffering and provide a business-friendly regulatory scheme.

Increases animal welfare and lowers food safety risks

Millions of hens in the egg industry in the U.S. are still confined in barren cages so small they can't even flap their wings. These conditions are not only cruel for the birds, but cage systems have been associated with higher rates of salmonella, a disease that can be deadly—especially in young children and the elderly. Evidence indicates that cage-free systems reduce salmonella risks.

Focuses solely on eggs and keeps costs down

A cage-free measure would not impact any other sector of animal agriculture, such as Perdue or any other broiler (meat) chicken producer. Production cost differential between cage and cage-free housing systems is minimal. Since cage-free eggs will become the baseline standard, retail markup will actually ***decline*** as grocery stores market the cage-free eggs as their "value" egg. Retailers will use these low-priced, cage-free eggs to draw foot traffic, just as they do today with cage eggs.

Modest, industry-written standards

The guidelines for cage-free systems would require at least 1 square foot per bird. Cage-free legislation simply implements the United Egg Producers' own cage-free standards.

Demand for change: Commercial egg-buyers

Cage-free legislation codifies where the market is already going. For example: Amazon, Costco, Target, Starbucks, Subway, Nestlé and many more companies, along with Maryland-based Giant Food, Sodexo and Unilever (which was recently purchased by Maryland-based McCormick), already use—or are on track to use—100% cage-free eggs in the United States. McDonald's met its 100% cage-free egg goal ahead of schedule. When it committed to going cage-free, McDonald's said it wouldn't raise prices of eggs, proving that it's possible to transition without impacting cost.

The majority of Maryland voters support cage-free legislation

A Hart Research survey found that a strong majority (two-thirds) of Marylanders want the state legislature to pass cage-free legislation. Even after hearing claims against the bill, support for cage-free legislation remained unchanged.

The time to pass cage-free egg reform is now

Egg prices are down nationwide. Industry experts agree that the abnormal price increases that occurred in the last few years were caused by factors unrelated to cage-free laws, particularly highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI). Egg industry data from WattAg (which is widely respected as a leading authority in the egg sector) shows that egg prices in California—which has a nearly identical law prohibiting the sale of eggs from hens in cages that has been in effect since 2022—changed by less than a penny per egg once the law was implemented.



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