

Support S2191/H7180: Help End the Unnecessary and Cruel Confinement of Farm Animals

In a democracy, laws are generally enacted based on the will of the people. But despite almost universal public opposition, millions of farm animals are forced to spend almost their entire lives packed into cages so small they can't even turn around. Not only is it legal in Rhode Island to force this abuse on pigs and calves, some factory farmers in the state take advantage of the lack of protection these animals have and actually use this extreme confine practice. Now is the time for Rhode Island to join the eight other states that have already enacted legislation outlawing these types of inhumane confinement systems prevalent in industrial agriculture.

Gestation Crates

Renowned animal scientist Dr. Temple Grandin states, *"Gestation crates are a real problem. Basically you're asking a sow to live in an airline seat. . . . We've got to treat animals right, and gestation stalls have got to go."*

Most sows in the pork industry spend nearly all of their four-month long pregnancies confined in barren gestation crates. These individual cages are approximately 2 feet wide and 7 feet long—so small the animals *can't even turn around* or take more than a step forward or backward. For several years, sows are confined in these crates, enduring a cycle of repeated impregnation. Virtually unable to move, they suffer muscle and bone degeneration that often leads to lameness. Many become neurotic, engaging in repetitive coping behaviors, such as constantly biting the bars in front of them. Due to the extreme length of time they're confined and the severe physical restrictions the crates impose, pigs in gestation crates suffer among the worst abuse in all of industrial agribusiness.



Veal Crates

Randy Strauss, CEO of Strauss Veal (the nation's largest veal producer) calls veal crates *"inhumane and archaic"* and says they *"do nothing more than subject a calf to stress, fear, physical harm and pain."*

Like breeding sows, most veal calves are intensively confined in individual crates too narrow for them even to turn around. Tethered by their necks to further restrict their movement, they're virtually immobilized for their entire 16-week long lives. Unfortunately, this confinement is common in the veal industry, despite overwhelming scientific evidence that it's inhumane and at odds with public opinion. Even the **American Veterinary Medical Association** says that calves should be able to turn around.



THERE ARE BETTER ALTERNATIVES

One alternative to gestation and veal crates is "group housing," which affords animals a greater freedom of movement.

- Researchers at **Iowa State University** have found that *"reproductive performance can be maintained or enhanced in well-managed group housing systems...without increasing labor."* They have also concluded that *"group housing...resulted in a weaned pig cost that was 11 percent less than the cost of a weaned pig from the individual stall confinement system."*
- One-third of the U.S. veal industry has already transitioned to group housing; these producers know that it's unnecessary to confine calves in crates. Even the **American Veal Association**—the veal industry's trade group—*"recommends that the entire veal industry convert to the group housing methodology."*

Gestation crates and veal crates are so cruel that eight U.S. states and the European Union have passed legislation to outlaw them. Rhode Island has the opportunity to take a stand against two of the cruelest forms of industrial agribusiness by codifying the notion that all animals—including animals raised for food—deserve at least these minimal protections from abuse.

