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# SHAE SORTWELL

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 2<sup>nd</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

**Hearing Testimony**  
**Senate Committee on Transportation and Local Government**  
**May 27, 2025**  
**Senate Bill 44**

Chairman Tomczyk and members of the Senate Committee on Transportation and Local Government – Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on SB 44, relating to the local regulation of fowl.

Individuals growing or raising their own food on their property is becoming more popular, regardless of their location, due to inflation, supply chain issues, and government food controls on farmland. Protecting this basic human right is essential. Government should encourage and protect, not limit, the right to raise your own food on your private property.

Several bigger municipalities already allow this practice, including Milwaukee, Green Bay, Kenosha, Racine, and Appleton. In fact, Madison doubled its cap to eight chickens within the last couple of years. Unfortunately, we have heard from constituents in other parts of Wisconsin that are not allowed this freedom.

To ensure the right to raise fowl on property is protected for all Wisconsinites, SB 44 is similar to Madison's chicken ordinances. Unless a cap is raised higher by a municipality, Wisconsinites would be able to keep up to four fowl on their residential property. Municipalities still have the flexibility to prohibit roosters, to require a permit or a notification of adjoining land owners, or to impose reasonable regulations on fowl housing and cleanliness standards.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify on this legislation and would gladly answer any questions the committee may have.



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# RACHAEL A. CABRAL-GUEVARA

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STATE SENATOR • 19<sup>TH</sup> SENATE DISTRICT

*Testimony before the Senate Committee on Transportation and Local Government*

*Senator Rachael Cabral-Guevara*

*May 27, 2025*

Hello, members of the Senate Committee on Transportation and Local Government. Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony on Senate Bill 44, a simple proposal that prohibits political subdivisions and sewerage districts from restricting the keeping of up to four chickens or quail (fowl) by property owners or certain lessors on properties zoned for residential use.

Allowing individuals to raise their own food on their property is becoming more popular, regardless of location, due to inflation, supply chain concerns, and government food controls on farmland. Therefore, protecting this basic human right is essential. Instead of limiting the right to raise your own food on your private property, the government should encourage and protect this practice.

Several bigger municipalities already allow this practice, including Milwaukee, Eau Claire, Green Bay, Kenosha, Racine, and Appleton. Last year, in Madison, the cap on chickens able to be held was doubled from four to eight. Unfortunately, this same freedom to keep chickens or fowl is not extended to all of Wisconsin.

By enacting Madison's chicken ordinances on a statewide level, the right to raise fowl on property will be ensured for all Wisconsinites. Unless the cap is raised higher by a municipality, Wisconsinites would be able to keep up to four fowl on their residential property. It is important to note that certain restrictions are still monitored by municipalities, such as the flexibility to prohibit roosters, require a permit or a notification of adjoining land owners, or impose reasonable regulations on fowl housing and cleanliness standards.

I am hopeful you will support this simple step in the right direction by allowing Wisconsinites to raise their own food on their own private property. Thank you for your time.