



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES**

**Testimony in Opposition to H.B. 5158
Presented to the Committee on Environment
February 9, 2011
By Laura Simon
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The Humane Society of the United States**

On behalf of The Humane Society of the United States, the nation's largest animal protection organization with more than 11 million supporters, including more than 188,000 in Connecticut, **I strongly urge the Committee on Environment to oppose House Bill 5158 and all other attempts to allow hunting on Sundays.**

The passage of HB 5158 would be the first step in an orchestrated effort to allow *all* forms of hunting on Sundays in Connecticut. Taking the first step down this slippery slope would further the interests of a tiny fraction of the population – 1% -- at the expense of other citizens who have their right to peacefully enjoy nature on the prime day of leisure.

According to the most recent data from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, wildlife watchers outnumber hunters in the Connecticut by a margin of 29 to 1. Wildlife watching is also an important part of Connecticut's economy. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, wildlife watchers in Connecticut outspend hunters 7 to 1, contributing about \$510 million to the economy annually.

Recreational hunting is already allowed six days per week. Opening Sunday to hunting takes away the one day a week when nature lovers may enter the woods to hike, watch wildlife, camp, photograph, or horseback ride without fear of being injured or killed by hunters. Many non-hunting wildlife enthusiasts will not go into the woods and fields during hunting season out of fear for their personal safety.

Even if Sunday hunting is only opened to bow-hunting on private land, arrows know no property boundaries and pose public safety hazards to anyone who is in the vicinity.

Adding some extra hunting days will absolutely not reduce deer populations in any meaningful way, given the deer's ability to increase their reproductive and survival rates when their numbers are lower, and "bounce back" given ample nutrition.

Likewise, additional hunting will not curb the spread of Lyme disease, as underscored by dozens of scientific papers and even a recent book by a prominent wildlife biologist (Richard Ostfeld, 2010 – Lyme Disease: The Ecology of a Complex System).

The bottom line is that Sunday hunting provides no ecological benefits and will only increase public safety risks and decrease public enjoyment of the outdoors.

I understand that there has been some discussion about amending the bill to allow each town to decide if Sunday hunting should be allowed within their respective towns. Such an amendment is a bad idea for several reasons:

- 1) it would create a patchwork of laws that would make enforcement and public notification a nightmare
- 2) it would compromise recreational opportunities for non-hunters who are less familiar with hunting regulations and would have trouble keeping track of where hunting is allowed and where it isn't
- 3) it can be difficult for hunters to distinguish property lines in the field, thereby safety issues are further compounded

There is no compelling reason to overturn this longstanding prohibition on Sunday hunting in order to appease a tiny minority at the expense of the vast number of CT residents who want to enjoy the outdoors.

On behalf of the HSUS, I urge the committee to reject H.B. 5158 and any other attempts to remove the prohibition on Sunday hunting in Connecticut.

Thank you for your time and consideration.