

As a constituent, a Republican, an avid outdoors enthusiast and a physician, I would like to thank you in advance for the opportunity to submit my concerns about House Bill 5080, which I oppose. Unfortunately, I am unable to attend the hearing on Monday because I was unaware that the hearing was scheduled for 3/17 until Friday, 3/14.

A few years ago, I had the opportunity to serve on the Newtown Tick-Borne Disease Action Committee. We researched in great detail transmission of tick-borne disease; peer-reviewed research; and impact of hunting on tick-borne disease, deer/motor vehicle accidents and agricultural/landscaping impacts. We reviewed the effect of aggressive recreational hunting in townships similar to Newtown. The evidence we reviewed was unequivocal: increasing recreational hunting will not decrease tick-borne disease, will not markedly decrease incidence of motor vehicle accidents involving deer collisions and will have minimal impact on landscaping deer impact. Further, recreational hunting will not ever reduce deer to a level that will affect the above issues commonly associated with deer. In addition, the evidence clearly indicated that changes in residential environmental landscape practices will markedly decrease each family's risk of developing tick-borne disease. As a point of fact, small acreages (less than 4 acres) have been shown to have a *higher incidence of ticks* when deer are eliminated, because smaller tick-bearing mammals carry ticks further into the property boundaries.

I am among the vast majority of Connecticut residents who enjoy our beautiful parks, forests, open spaces and trail system who do not hunt. During hunting season, we have to curtail our outdoor activities. Why? Because of concerns that hunters might mistake us, our family members, or our animals, as a deer. Allow me to give you a few examples. My teenage daughter has a old brown quarter horse named J. We rescued him, and my daughter loves this horse. My daughter loves to hop on this horse and ride through the trails behind our home, that connect with town and state trails. I do not allow Lara to ride her horse during hunting season on the trails: except on Sundays. Will you take that day away? Similarly, I have a beautiful, large German Shepherd dog named Sirius. Sirius was bred by Guiding Eyes for the Blind in Yorktown, NY, and was released to our family after making it almost all the way through the program. He is now 10 years old. I can safely allow him off leash, because he returns to me immediately on recall. However, during hunting season, I cannot walk him off leash because a hunter (sober or perhaps inebriated) might mistake this 85 pound Shepherd for a deer. In fact, I do not walk him on the trails during hunting season because of this concern. Except on Sundays, when I do not have to worry about hunters.

Are you going to take away this one day (Sunday) from the majority of your constituents because of a vocal minority? The majority of us have professions that do not allow us to take off work on short notice, but it does not mean that we do not have strong feelings about this bill, and we vote too. Please consider our concerns about safety for ourselves, our children and our families; the significant benefits already enjoyed by recreational hunters; and the absence of any significant gain in any respect to this State and its residents should Sunday recreational hunting be allowed. Please consider that the majority of recreational outdoors enthusiasts are not hunters, and that we have only one day per week during hunting season (Sunday) that is safe to enjoy outdoors activities. Will you take Sundays away from us?

Sincerely,

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Oppose Sunday hunting, H.B. 5080 - AN ACT CONCERNING DEER MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS ON PRIVATE PROPERTY AND AUTHORIZING BOW AND ARROW HUNTING ON PRIVATE

PROPERTY ON SUNDAYS-- *Would allow bow and arrow hunting on Sundays.*

□ STATUS:publichearingtobeheldonMarch17,2014

Talking points:

- **Only 1% of Connecticut residents hunt. Let the 99% enjoy a day of peace!** The overwhelming majority of people do not participate in hunting, and have only one day a week during hunting season when they can use the outdoors safely without the threat of bullets or arrows.
- **Sunday hunting will not resolve deer-related problems.** The problem with managing deer numbers through any kind of hunting is their numbers “bounce back” after hunting season. This is due to increased food resources available for the remaining deer, which results in does breeding at an earlier age and more fawns being born. This is a natural phenomenon—a biological adaptation to help wild animals recover from cyclic population losses. Hunting creates this bounce-back effect that in no way provides any long-term population “control”.
- **Bow hunting is one of the most inhumane forms of hunting because it results in unacceptably high crippling rates** – a high proportion of deer are wounded even when the most sophisticated forms of archery are used. Further, if the “blood trail” extends outside the area within which the bow hunter has permission to hunt, the injured deer will be left to suffer.
- **Wildlife watchers, hikers, mountain bikers, dog walkers, and horseback riders outnumber hunters in Connecticut by 29 to 1 and outspend them by 7 to 1**, contributing more than \$500 million dollars to the state's economy annually.
- **Sunday hunting will endanger public safety.** Arrows and bullets know no boundaries and pose public safety hazards to anyone who is within a large radius of the hunter. Further, domestic animals, such as dogs and horses, are sometimes mistaken for game animals. Thus, expanding recreational opportunities for hunters diminishes opportunities for hikers, horseback riders, bird watchers, and many others.
- **Hunting will not reduce (and may increase) Lyme disease risk.** The Black-legged tick has well over 100 hosts, including all mammals, many popular songbirds, and even lizards – thus the removal of one host isn't enough to suppress the Lyme-disease causing tick. In addition, research indicates that hunting may put the public more at risk by creating disease “hot spots” -- Ticks questing for a large host are more likely to end up on people and dogs after deer numbers have been reduced. There's a good reason why the CDC and health authorities don't recommend hunting to control Lyme disease – because it doesn't work.
- **A better approach:** There is no “magic bullet” for resolving deer problems. A better approach is for communities to adopt deer problem management programs that focus on site-specific solutions and new technologies, like PZP immunocontraception programs.