

Dear Co-chair Kennedy, Co-chair Albis, and Members of the Environment Committee,

I am a born and raised Connecticut citizen who, for the past decade, has advocated for the welfare of elephants held captive in zoos and circuses. I write today about their wild counterparts, in support of HB 6955. I'm sure you will hear a great many facts and figures today, and I won't reiterate them here, but you must know that the elephant and rhino populations in the wild have been and are being decimated by poachers meeting a worldwide demand for illegal ivory products.

The United States is the second largest market in the world for illegal ivory, and the only hope for stopping this market is to tighten restrictions on the sale of the product so that the illegal ivory cannot slip in with the "legal." Every state in this country needs to take action now so that no ivory can be purchased. New Jersey and New York have passed legislation to ban the sale of ivory and rhino horn; California yesterday passed its proposed ban out of committee; several other states are pursuing similar legislation.

Connecticut needs to step up among the leading states on this topic – both because of our proximity to major port states and because of our symbolic value, given our history.

Although this is from California, I think that it's worth pointing to a poll that was recently commissioned and announced by a coalition of welfare, conservation, and zoo groups.  
[http://www.humanesociety.org/news/press\\_releases/2015/03/ca-poll-ivory-rhino-trade-030915.html](http://www.humanesociety.org/news/press_releases/2015/03/ca-poll-ivory-rhino-trade-030915.html)

It should be noted that *neither political party, gun ownership, or musical instrument ownership* affect voters' support of a law that is clear and free of loopholes. I believe that the outcome would be similar in Connecticut. Please do not let a vocal minority concerned about any and all limitations on gun sales prevent the passage of this critical legislation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Deb Robinson, JD

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