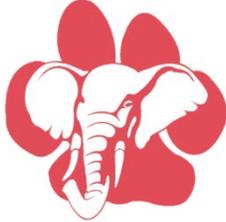


*The Nation's First
Elephant Sanctuary*



PAWS
PERFORMING ANIMAL
WELFARE SOCIETY

Founded in 1984
P R O T E C T I O N
E D U C A T I O N
A D V O C A C Y
S A N C T U A R Y
pawsweb.org

March 9, 2015

The Honorable Ted Kennedy, Co-Chair
The Honorable James Albis, Co-Chair
Environment Committee
Connecticut General Assembly
State Capitol
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Senator Kennedy and Representative Albis,

On behalf of the Performing Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) and its more than 50,000 supporters – many of whom are Connecticut residents – I urge you and members of the Environment Committee to support HB 6955, the bill that would prohibit the sale of ivory and rhinoceros horn in Connecticut.

Founded in 1984, PAWS operates three sanctuaries for captive wildlife in Northern California. Our largest facility is ARK 2000, a 2300-acre natural habitat refuge where we care for a variety of animals, including Asian and African elephants, tigers, African lions, black leopard, and bears. PAWS is licensed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and it is accredited by the Global Federation of Animal Sanctuaries. I serve on the Director's Advisory Committee on the Humane Care and Treatment of Wild Animals for the California Department of Fish & Wildlife.

I have worked with elephants for more than 30 years, and after getting to know these animals as I have, I cannot imagine the horror that individual elephants and their families endure when under attack by poachers who mercilessly slaughter both young and old for their tusks. The insidious trade in ivory is not just about species or populations, it concerns individual elephants who maintain intricate familial connections, possess complex systems of communication, and who are empathetic and self-aware – making their physical and psychological suffering all the more devastating.

Nearly 100 elephants are killed each day in Africa, and more than 1,000 rhinos out of a remaining 29,000 in the wild were poached in South Africa alone in 2014. These animals are gunned down or poisoned and stripped of their tusks or horns for costly trinkets and symbols of social status. The criminal syndicates driving the illegal wildlife trade are often involved in other illicit activities such as narcotics and weapons, and some are linked with terrorist groups.

The United States is the second largest market for illegal ivory. New York and New Jersey have already passed strong legislation to end the sales of ivory and rhino horns, and many other states are pursuing similar bills.

Unless action is taken now, elephants and rhinos are headed toward extinction. PAWS stands behind HB 6955 so wild elephants and rhinos can live free in their native lands for generations to come. I strongly urge you to support this vital bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ed Stewart". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "E" and "S".

Ed Stewart
President and Co-founder, PAWS



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