

Kevin J. Tulimieri
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Dear Chairman Kennedy and Members of the Environment Committee,

My name is Kevin J. Tulimieri, I am a resident and registered voter in the State of Connecticut. I am an active collector of early American antiques, a member of the Connecticut Society of Genealogists, as well as an author and lecturer on early American and Connecticut history.

I am here to request an Addendum to H.B. No. 6955, An Act Prohibiting the Sale and Trade of Ivory and Rhinoceros Horn. I support the efforts to stop the Sale and Trade of Ivory and Rhinoceros horn derived from contemporary production. However, consideration must be given to the use of ivory in antique furniture and decorative arts made before 1865.

The date 1865 is important, as by the close of the American Civil War furniture and decorative arts were beginning to be produced in factory settings. Prior to 1865, American furniture and decorative arts were produced by artist craftsmen working with hand tools in small workshops. The majority of these artist craftsmen, especially in Connecticut, produced objects that were used locally. These pre-1865 artifacts often feature significant historic value and provide a tangible connection to our shared cultural heritage.

The use of ivory in furniture and decorative arts before 1865 was a distinct luxury and quite limited in scale. The majority of these objects feature ivory as a small percentage of construction, often used as an inlay decoration or highlight. As Connecticut's seafaring history dates back to the 17th century, many examples of ivory embellishments in Connecticut-made antiques survive. A notable example is the important Chippendale tall clock made by Thomas Harland (1735-1807) of Norwich, Connecticut. This fine tall clock was made between 1775 and 1790 and is now in the collection of the Detroit Institute of Art. The case was made by a Norwich cabinetmaker, hired by Harland, and embellished with ivory capitals, bases and stop fluting on the decorative columns. An image of the clock can be seen at: <http://www.dia.org/object-info/edc2f244-6f78-44dc-b0bf-9fcba83cc94b.aspx?position=295>

This masterpiece of Connecticut furniture illustrates how the limited use of ivory was incorporated into a standard piece of early American furniture to impressive results.

The Thomas Harland tall clock also illustrates how genuine antiques can be identified and the use of ivory can be dated. A skilled museum curator, professional cabinetmaker, antiques dealer or collector will be able to examine an object and determine the construction techniques and tools used, as well as originality. It is a standard practice in the antiques field, as originality is an important indicator of condition and value.

If an all out ban on ivory was enacted by the State of Connecticut, it would irreparably harm the field of early American furniture and decorative arts. Collectors like myself would be harmed by the loss of access to a large quantity of important historic objects. And therefore, the understanding and appreciation of early American antiques would suffer as well.

I ask the Environment Committee to act thoughtfully and protect the field of early American furniture and decorative arts by including an exclusion for items produced before the date of 1865 from H.B. No. 6955, An Act Prohibiting the Sale and Trade of Ivory and Rhinoceros Horn.

Thank you for your consideration,

Kevin J. Tulimieri