

Dear Committee Members:

I'm always astounded by the ruthlessness, mean spiritedness and stupidity of bills and laws that would make a little old lady subject to arrest, fines and incarceration for attempting to sell an ivory brooch she or her mother bought from Macy's or J.C.Penny's in the 1960's.

Wow, a horrendous crime isn't it. Hope she's tackled, cuffed and treated like the criminal your proposed law would make her when she's arrested. That's satire, folks.

Perhaps you're not old enough to have personally walked by a display case filled with carved ivory jewelry at such stores back in the day; but those hundreds of thousands of legal jewelry pieces sold across America, all pre-date the 1970's and 90's ivory bans. Those items, plus colonial era painted ivory miniature portraits, tall-ship era scrimshaw, European and oriental carved statuary brought back from grand-tour overseas travels of the 19th thru early 20th century; ivory brought back by soldiers, dealers and diplomats from around the world up thru the Viet Nam war; and carved and raw fossilized ivories... these combined millions of pieces of pre-bans ivories constituting America's legal old stock holdings and trade haven't evaporated; it's still here. To not make accommodations for what's easily recognizable vintage and antique ivory in the marketplace (hell'o, there are experts available to accurately declare what's old carved for what's "undocumented") is the height of irresponsible governance.

I recognize that you have been caught up in the frenzy of an Ivory ban hysteria whipped up by HSUS and others; but please stop and consider your law abiding constituents who are not peddling fresh-harvested, blood Ivory and who abhor that illegal stuff like you and the rest of us.

Focus instead on the very few (if any) in your small State that have provable connections to the African-Chinese-Asian axis of current poachers of blood Ivory, rhinoceros horn, and other endangered animals' parts. They are the problem, not granny and your local antique dealers. Use such words as - knowingly - in your legislation; add provisions for experts being allowed to differentiate between the legal old and illegal new; eliminate banning easily recognized fossilized ivories... do things right!

There's no justification to adopt draconian, unnecessarily harmful laws that infringe on your citizenry's human rights. Please don't waste your time formulating unjust overreaching Ivory ban laws that will soon be invalidated by the Judiciary* reaffirming and Congress strengthening of the CAFRA laws protecting personal property rights. (*already a suit in California will undoubtedly undo that State's ill conceived legislation on this issue.)

Testimony from Don Nigro, 191 Kilauea Ave., Hilo, HI