

I strongly oppose bill hb5578.

I support the goal of stopping the barbaric and criminal poaching of elephants in Africa, Asia, or anywhere else in the world. Because of the important artistic, practical, historical and economic value of ivory, I am also in favor of preserving the trade of domestic ivory in the United States.

The following is what my father wrote on his feelings of any pending legislation that will stop the trade of legal ivory. I would like to read it on his behalf, as he has recently passed away.

Let me tell you a till bit about myself, and how this ban will effect me. I am a Vietnam Veteran, and an upstanding American Citizen. I've worked hard all my life, for myself and my family. I started my business in 1993, and over the last 20 years have built it to what is today. I've worked hard, paid my taxes, and make sure that I've always followed the letter of the law. This proposed legislation is going to put me in a position where I'll have to stop my business. If this proposal passes it will criminalize my business, hurt myself & my family, and destroy all that I have worked so hard all these years to achieve. Everything that I have strived for my whole life will be in jeopardy. I have invested my life, my finances, every once of my being into this business, that now with the stroke of a pen and someones arbitrary decision I'm possibly going to loose everything I've worked for. This will negatively impact not only myself but thousands of people. I beg of you to reconsider.

Those were the words of my father James Alaimo. My husband and I run our family business now, and depend on the sale and trade of legal ivory that exists in the United States. I implore you to listen to reason and not move forward with this bill hb5578

I will leave you with one final thought. Dr. Daniel Stiles, a world renowned expert on African elephants and a prominent member of conservation organization, has recently concluded that the initiatives under consideration in the United States will dramatically increase elephant poaching instead of decreasing it. Crushing the domestic market in the United States will make the legal supply of ivory disappear. As ivory becomes rarer, prices will increase, giving poachers an even greater incentive to kill elephants for their valuable tusks. It would be catastrophic to destroy the lives of innocent artisans, ruin the finances of legitimate businesses, deprive people of lifelong collections, and in the process reward poachers for slaughtering elephants.

I plan to be there on Friday to state my opposition in person.

Very truly yours,

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