

Dear Connecticut Legislator,

The Piano Technicians Guild is a worldwide organization with 3400 members consisting of piano technicians, rebuilders, dealers and piano enthusiasts. The Connecticut Chapter of the PTG has 80 members. Connecticut citizens rely on us for the care and service of their pianos as well as help when a piano needs to be sold.

I am writing to you today regarding Bill **HB 5578 - Banning The Sale of Ivory in Connecticut**. The Connecticut Chapter of the PTG would like to offer our assistance in developing a bill that combats illegal trade in ivory without harming law-abiding Connecticut residents. We are particularly focused on making sure this Act includes an exemption for ivory found on the keyboards of musical instruments already purchased.

We believe an outright ban on the sale of ivory, without exemptions for certain musical instruments, would have a substantial negative impact for a great many Connecticut residents, museums and trades people without saving one elephant.

Connecticut has a long history in the ivory trade. The Pratt Read Company, formerly located in Ivoryton, was for decades the preeminent piano action and key manufacturer in North America.

Because of this long history, Connecticut has a concentration of skilled and dedicated piano technicians and an enthusiastic base of piano owners and lovers. Many of these residents and institutions own pianos

and other musical instruments with ivory keytops that were legal and customary at the time of their original manufacture and sale. Ivory was popular because it was the best material that was available at the time.

Developments in materials and machinery has made plastic and acrylic keytops the preferred surface because of their durability and cost as well as feel to the fingers. As these alternatives arose and as the laws on elephant ivory tightened, the musical instrument industry turned away from ivory, but thousands of ivory keyboards still exist and are used daily.

Thousands of Connecticut residents are just as against elephant poaching as you and I are. To harm these residents without impacting the poaching is wrong and we would like to help the State of Connecticut avoid making that mistake.

We would welcome the opportunity to speak with you in person.

Sincerely,

Eric Johnson, President

CT Chapter of the PTG

1771 Post Road East

Suite 239

Westport CT 06880