

Dear Environmental Committee,

Please vote NO on Bill No. 5578. The bill is a radical overreach by the government that can't be demonstrated to have any significant effect on the poaching of elephants in Africa. It is a "feel good" measure that would result in millions of wasted dollars, trampling of property rights, and damage to hundreds of small businesses across the state.

In February of 2014 President Obama signed an Executive Order which created a ban on the commercial trade of elephant ivory with limited exceptions crafted after months of study and numerous public meetings. Bill No. 5578 goes beyond Federal rules to make criminals of antique collectors and firearm collectors.

Proponents will argue that without Bill No. 5578 ivory from poached elephants will somehow make its way to America and be confused with antiques.

Ivory from poached elephants is not coming to America. Even before the 2014 Executive Order the problem was not in the United States. According to a March 15th, 2013 article in The Washington Post, 23 seizures of over 800 kg, documented by The United Nations from 2009-2011, show that elephants are killed and stripped of their ivory in East and Southern Africa. Then they're shipped to Southeast Asia to be processed from raw tusks into commercial products, which are shipped to Thailand or China, where a rising middle class is buying up more and more.

Proponents will argue that the United States is the "second biggest market for illegal ivory in the world". Given that ivory has been imported in many different forms to this country for two hundred years it is likely we have more objects containing ivory than any other country on earth. Furthermore, now that virtually all ivory less than 100 years old has been declared illegal, it stands to reason many small scale infractions will occur involving that ivory. This explains why you still see ivory in the U.S. and why there's still a significant domestic ivory trade: it's old ivory that arrived here before the 1989 CITES ban. Most arrests involve the attempt to export *previously legal* ivory to China- which economists would argue lessens the pressure for poaching.

How much poached ivory is making it to the United States? Not much if you search for it. Why would anyone smuggle it here? The price of raw ivory is approximately twenty times higher in Asia than the United States.

Proponents of this bill would like Connecticut to establish an entire bureaucracy to duplicate Federal regulations and reach even further, creating a *de facto* ban on any legitimate antique, firearm or musical instrument that happens to contain ANY ivory.

Nonetheless, the antiques industry has no interest in ivory trinkets. We only want to preserve legitimate antiques and objects of art that happen to include ivory as part of their content. To deny these objects legitimacy because of the current struggles of the elephant is to deny history, art and culture.

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