

March 9 2016

Re: SUPPORT HB 5578 (prohibiting sale and trade of ivory and rhinoceros horn)

Please vote in **SUPPORT of HB 5578**, PROHIBITING THE SALE AND TRADE OF IVORY AND RHINOCEROUS HORN.

I vote, and this issue is important to me.

I live in Chester, Connecticut, an area that historically, if unintentionally, contributed to the killing of elephant to acquire ivory for the manufacture of piano keys. This manufacturing role is both a proud and a shameful part of this region's history. During the 100 years from the 1840s until 1940s, more than 500,000 elephants were killed for the ivory that fueled local industry. We can perhaps excuse the failure to consider the consequence of those killings use of ivory given the thinking (or lack of thinking) of the times. However, such obtuse thinking is not excusable now. Killing of elephants for their tusks continues; that is not legal is not the issue. We must act upon that knowledge. Outlawing any sale of ivory is easy, essential, and absolutely critical to the protection of this species. It is also vital to our human responsibility as keepers of the health, safety, and moral practice of our planet.

What concerns me the most is:

- An estimated 50,000 elephants are killed each year.
- Killing methods are horribly cruel, causing terrible pain.
- Killing the adults leaves juvenile elephants without needed parental support, jeopardizing their survival as well.
- Extremist and terrorists groups use elephant poaching as a means of generating revenue.
- Hundreds of park rangers have also been killed to gain access to elephants.

It is critical that we ban the sale of any ivory and not just "new ivory" because it is easy to make new ivory look like it is antique. There is no practical means, nor any practice in place, to determine the actual age of ivory, so the sale of any ivory enables the sale of newly poached ivory.

Federal laws against the sale of ivory are not sufficient. It is imperative that every state establishes laws preventing any and all sale or trade of ivory. If the sale of old ivory is allowed, poachers will have reason to smuggle ivory in, then sell it with a fabricated history. The only answer is to ban all sale of ivory. New York and New Jersey have already taken this important action. It is now our turn. Indeed, Connecticut's historic role in the use of ivory makes our state's stand now against any sale of ivory that much more important.

Connecticut must act to ban any sale of ivory. Failure to do would mean we would be complicit in this terrible practice.

Thank you for your consideration of this important bill.

Sincerely yours,

Janith Taigen
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