

Dear Co-Chair Kennedy, Co-Chair Albis, and Honorable Members of the Environment Committee,

Please accept this as my testimony in **SUPPORT of HB 5578**, AN ACT PROHIBITING THE SALE AND TRADE OF IVORY AND RHINOCEROUS HORN.

Folks, I vote in every election and take that right very seriously. I appreciate this opportunity to be able to communicate with you, as my elected representatives how this is one of many issues regarding animal advocacy and ending the brutality humans impose on wild and domesticated animals about which I care so deeply and vote accordingly. Please consider the following:

I support **HB 5578** because there is no excuse for the buying and selling of animal body parts in this civilized society. As often as I sometimes wonder just how "civilized" we actually are (i.e. presidential campaign and some republican party candidates, for one), I still have faith that as we have become a more global society with information at our fingertips about everything and anything, we cannot continue turning our backs on wildlife that suffer at the hands of the brutality of humans. And, in this scary time in our history, not only are the animals suffering horribly cruel deaths ----often in front of their babies who are traumatized and left without the safety of a parent's protection----but those brave souls who are in charge of protecting them are being slaughtered, as well.

I urge you to "Google" elephants, and their family units. I urge you to learn about the socialization of these incredibly glorious animals. Rhinos are as wonderful and glorious. Neither of these creatures grow horns and tusks for the purpose of our buying and selling. These beautiful protuberances were never ours, and will never be ours to "purchase" for whatever outlandish reason we can think of; it is almost unimaginable that we must be writing letters about this in 2016.

Also, here are some other reasons any person with compassion and empathy will understand:

- **Unprecedented global poaching crisis:** Wildlife trafficking is an escalating global crisis fueled in part by the U.S. ivory market – which is among the top few markets globally. Between 2010 and 2012, 100,000 elephants were killed for their ivory – an average of one every 15 minutes. All extant five rhino species are threatened with extinction, with merely 29,000 remaining worldwide.
- **Horrific cruelty:** Elephant and rhino poaching is a brutal and bloody practice – animals are sometimes chased with helicopters and shot down with military-grade weapons. Tusks and horns are harvested by cutting off the faces of the sometimes still-living animals. Babies are often killed for their tiny stubble of tusk or horn. Elephant babies, who do not have tusks, are left as orphans; unable to fend for themselves, they often die if not rescued by humans.
- **National security issue:** Extremist groups and terrorist organizations are often involved in wildlife trafficking, using it to finance their military operations. At \$8-10 billion per year, the illegal wildlife trade

ranks as the fourth most lucrative criminal activity internationally, behind only narcotics, counterfeiting, and human trafficking.

- During the last decade, **more than one thousand park rangers across the world have been killed by poachers** while on duty.
- **Intrastate loophole:** Federal laws do not reach into intrastate (within a state) commerce, thus providing a major loophole for illegal ivory or ivory of unknown origins to be laundered into our state and sold to unsuspecting Connecticut residents.
- **Federal laws and regulations pertaining to ivory trade are confusing and riddled with loopholes** that are exploited by those involved in the international and domestic ivory trade. This also leads to consumer confusion about what is legal and what is not. The result is a flourishing, poorly regulated domestic ivory market in the United States.
- This bill **would not criminalize possession or prohibit inheritance** gifts—this bill takes aim the market for ivory (i.e., trade and sales).
- **Connecticut must not become a haven for illicit ivory.** Surrounding states have either already passed laws (NY, NJ) or are in the process (MA, VT). There have been several recent significant ivory and rhino horn seizures in the northeast.

Thank you for your time and consideration and compassion. Please make Connecticut a leader and model for reasonable, rational, logical, and humane animal advocacy for all animals.

Yours truly,
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