

**To the Connecticut Joint Environment Committee
Testimony in opposition to HB5578**

Should this Rembrandt painting, created in 1631, which contains elephant ivory, be declared contraband and be subject to sales ban, confiscation and possible destruction?



Rembrandt, "Old Man with a Gold Chain," 1631, oil on panel

According to *Art in the Making: Rembrandt* by David Bomford, the blacks Rembrandt used were "almost always provided by bone or ivory black, prepared, as the name suggested, from animal bones or waste ivory by charring in a closed crucible." Ivory black and bone black are artists' pigments that were in use since historic times by painters such as Rembrandt and Velazquez and more recently by Manet or Picasso.

If Connecticut House Bill 5578 becomes law without exemptions for antique ivory, paintings like this would become illegal. They likely

would not be allowed to be shipped to Connecticut to be displayed at the Wadsworth Atheneum or the Florence Griswold Museum. Items like this painting would have no monetary value and no replacement value, which means their appraised value would be zero; such items would not be able to be insured.

Before Connecticut HB 5578 moves forward in the Connecticut House, it needs to be modified with exemptions for antique ivory items, including paintings on ivory or created with ivory pigments, fine antique silver and pewter that might have finials and handles of ivory, antique American Revolutionary War edged weapons, American Civil War pistols with ivory grips, 17th-century Asian figurines, 14th-century Italian rosary beads, and instruments such as violins and grand pianos, to name just a few items that would be affected.

HB 5578 as written is an example of overreach causing serious impact to small businesses, antiques dealers, auction companies and retired citizens of the state who would not be able to sell their collections of legal antiques, musical instruments, or guns and edged weapons to help pay medical bills and support themselves in retirement. This bill proposes to make valueless personal property belonging to citizens of Connecticut.

There are U.S. Federal ivory laws in place; why does Connecticut need state legislation? Also, who will enforce such new legislation without a substantial addition to the Connecticut budget for existing Fish and Wildlife personnel?

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