

AN ACT PROHIBITING THE SALE AND TRADE OF IVORY AND RHINOCEROS HORN.

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I would like to thank the Environment Committee for the opportunity to express my strong support of HB 5578. This bill would ban the trafficking of ivory and rhino horn in Connecticut.

Over 30,000 elephants are killed by poaching every year. An elephant disappears every 15 minutes, leaving thousands of orphans to die slowly standing by their slaughtered parent's bodies. Along with the alarming numbers of elephants being slaughtered, a growing number of terrorist groups in Africa are turning to the illegal trade of elephant tusks to finance their operations, prompted by great demand for ivory by wealthy Asians.

Al Qaeda-affiliated al-Shabab in Somalia, Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army in central Africa and Boko Haram in Nigeria are among the militants making money from trafficking ivory tusks from slaughtered elephants to pay their fighters and buy arms and ammunition.

Rhinos share a similar plight as they are also killed for their horns that are sought for their "medicinal powers" in Asia. Each year more than 1,000 rhinos are killed. Like elephants, they could also become extinct in less than 12 years if this activity does not stop.

There are real things we can all do to stop these beautiful animals from being massacred while cutting off funding for some of the world's most notorious terrorist networks. New York and New Jersey have passed similar laws and it is my hope that Connecticut will follow their lead on this important issue.

Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to testify on this important issue.

Sincerely,



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