

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

Please accept this testimony in SUPPORT of SB 227, AAC Cecil's Law.

I am a voter, and this issue is important.

Like nearly 90% of Americans, I disapprove of trophy hunting. To hunt a species solely for the purpose of acquiring a trophy is mind boggling in today's day and age! This issue gained national attention and worldwide outrage last summer when Cecil, a beloved lion who lived in Zimbabwe's Hwange National Park, was lured out of his home and shot with an arrow by a Minnesota dentist. Cecil suffered, as the arrow shot was not immediately lethal ("crippling rates" are very high with bow hunting), and then died.

Trophy hunters highly covet the "Africa Big Five" species, imported to the U.S. in staggering numbers between 2005 and 2014: 5,600 African lions, 4,600 African elephants, 4,500 African leopards, 330 southern white rhinos, and 17,200 African buffalo. All but the buffalo are considered endangered or threatened with extinction. Ensuring that no person imports, possesses, sells, offers for sale or transports in Connecticut any big five African species, will end Connecticut's role in the global slaughter of these magnificent species.

Businesses are washing their hands clean of trophy hunting. Forty-five airlines have stopped transporting some or all types of hunting trophies, especially that of the Africa Big Five.

Trophy hunting is not conservation. Many animals are killed in countries with widespread corruption that prevents money raised from trophy hunting from benefiting conservation efforts. In 2014 and 2015, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service prohibited imports of African elephant trophies from Tanzania and Zimbabwe, citing questionable management practices, a lack of effective law enforcement, and weak governance. Further, South Africa recently banned exports of African leopard trophies for 2016, citing mismanagement of trophy hunting due to a lack of data on both population and carrying capacity.

Like in other types of hunting, trophy hunters prefer to kill the largest and the strongest animals, usually males with the most impressive manes, tusks, horns, etc. But these animals are endowed with the best genes for survival and once killed, their strong genes are lost to future generations. It's time to put a stop to this unnecessary and cruel "sport."

For Cecil's sake, please support SB 227.

Thank you.

Leslie Bruzik