



State of Connecticut

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***March 4, 2016 Testimony by Representative Mitch Bolinsky
Before the Environment Committee on:
RAISED SB 227: AN ACT CONCERNING CECIL'S LAW***

My thanks to the Honorable Co-Chairs, Senator Kennedy and Representative Albis; Vice Chairs Senator Moore and Representative Arconti; Ranking Members Senator Chapin and Representative Shaban; and the entire Environment Committee for the opportunity to discuss a very bipolar Raised Bill.

First, I'd like to commend the committee on the spirit of ***RAISED SB 227: AN ACT CONCERNING CECIL'S LAW***. Who amongst us did not feel a sense of personal disgust last year when Walter Palmer, a poaching Minnesota dentist tracked, wounded and eventually killed Cecil, a protected, endangered, locally treasured resident of Hwange National Park in Zimbabwe? This cruel, prolonged slaughter was a morally bankrupt act carried out in a politically corrupt nation.

While I support the spirit of this bill, I am here to sound a loud alarm about its unintended consequences, as currently written. Because of its outright ban of all products containing ivory, bone and horn – the “plastics” of the early 20th century and earlier, we will be doing permanent and catastrophic damage to a sensitive part of Connecticut's economic engine and not accomplishing the desired result of this bill. Criminalizing the possession and sale of antiques will not save one modern elephant, lion, rhino or whale. We must end poaching, not burn antiquities like we're writing some modern Orwellian novel.

Connecticut's Antiques businesses have experienced some softness in today's poor economy but, it is estimated there are at least 871 active retail dealers in Connecticut, employing thousands of Connecticut taxpayers and generating upwards of \$2.5-billion in annual, taxable revenue. These numbers do not include wholesalers, auction-houses, distributors, goods and services consumed by these businesses, or the transportation of goods. This long-standing, reputable trade deserves our protection too.

Additionally, I have been contacted by several, mostly elderly, long-time residents of my community who are “Antiques Savvy” owners of treasured family heirlooms and antiquities. They are fearful that, as written, this law will make their possessions illegal and subject to seizure. The requirement of having to forensically determine which of their antiques contain ivory or bone and then have to apply for a certificate of possession from DEEP has many of these folks concerned enough to consider retiring out of state. Don't we already have enough of an outward migration problem?

If this Certificate of Possession even exists at this time, does DEEP have the resources and expertise to inspect hundreds of thousands of pieces upon enactment? Remember, this material was the “plastic of centuries past”. Even antique clocks may have bits of ivory in their movements, not visible but there. Silver tea sets and flatware may contain small inserts as insulators, keeping pieces cool to the touch in

the olden days. Pianos, old pool tables, jewelry box drawer-pulls. This material is everywhere and confiscating family heirlooms will not bring back a single animal.

Please, let's support Cecil's Law but also take measures to protect an important industry by amending this bill to exempt antiques of 100-years or greater with ivory, bone, whale and other features, as well as eliminating a costly and cumbersome certificate of possession and DEEP inspections of antiques

Thank you for your time and should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Respectfully,

Representative Mitch Bolinsky