Connecticut Joint Committee on Environment
Testimony in opposition to S.B. 227 March 2, 2016

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

I've been an antiques dealer since 1988, specializing in folk art painting, sculpture, and 19th-century American marine antiques, including antique scrimshaw. My clients include many residents and institutions in Connecticut.

Although I agree with the overall goal of Bill S.B. 227—to help stop the slaughter of elephants, rhinos and other endangered African species—as presently written, the bill contains significant overreach and would reduce to zero the value of antiques containing even a small amount of elephant ivory. This is true for every Connecticut person or company trading in legitimate antique ivory. Because insurance for loss through theft or destruction is based on appraised replacement value, it would not be possible to insure these antiques. They also could not be used to collateralize a loan. Again, appraised value would be zero. Elderly Connecticut residents could not sell their antique ivory collections to raise money for elder care or medical expenses.

Regarding collections in museums, universities, and historical associations, such institutions add to their collections via acquisitions from sales at auction houses and donations from estates of collectors. Direct purchase of antique objects of any kind that contain ivory would be banned—items such 18th-century watercolor portraits, crucifixes and rosary beads, American Revolutionary War swords, and Eskimo-made cribbage boards. Estates would unlikely donate without the incentive of tax deduction. As a condition of donation, the donor must supply an appraisal of current value.

I recommend changes to Bill S.B. 227 to include adding exemptions for ivory antiques 100 years or older as well as for items that contain a small amount of ivory, such as tools, guns and edged weapons, musical instruments, and paintings on ivory.

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