

The goal stated for this bill is “To prohibit the import, sale, and trade of big-game hunting trophies from overseas.” I have no problem at all with that goal. However, it is EXTREMELY difficult for me to understand how such a goal would possibly be served by making it a felony for me to continue to possess items I have that contain ivory—an 1850 piano, several accordions that have ivory embellishment, and several other antique musical instruments with small pieces decoration of what I assume to be ivory (although I really have no technical knowledge to know if any or all are bone or even celluloid made to look like ivory), an antique ivory necklace pendant I bought about 30 years ago for my wife, and several miniature paintings that use ivory (or, again, possibly bone or celluloid) as a foundation for the watercolor illustration.

In other words, although the goal may be worthy, the translation of that into this kind of TOTALIST approach that includes old and antique ivory that was obtained and used for decorative purposes long before any of us were alive makes no sense at all. As my wife has said, that ivory can’t be given back to the elephants who died so long ago, nor can destroying it have ANY effect whatsoever on the stated goal of the bill, which has to do with poaching of living elephants and other such game to satisfy the whims of having “big-game hunting trophies from overseas.”

I know from the little reading I have done on this topic that reasonable regulation, which allows for antique ivory especially in cases in which it is a relatively small percentage of the total item, can be crafted and used to attack the immoral trading in ivory specifically for sport and/or the importation of ivory that is relatively new or usable for such purposes. Why is that approach not being proposed?

Please do not pass such a totalist bill, and rather frame one that ACTUALLY concerns the ACTUAL problems related to new ivory, poaching, etc. in a way that would actually be much more effective for enforcement than making even possession, much less trade, of bits and pieces of antique ivory that is a decorative element of a larger piece illegal.

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