

Testimony SB 227 An Act concerning Cecil's law. To prohibit the import, sale and
trade of big-game hunting trophies from overseas
Environment Committee 3/4/16
Karen Laski, Board member, CT Votes for Animals

I've worked for over 30 years with other animal advocates trying to free elephants and other exotic animals from circuses and sideshows. One thing that Ringling always threw back at me was that the animals are better off with them, than they are in the wild. My answer was always, "well at least poaching animals is against the law." But the laws should be stronger and Cecil's law is exactly what is needed. I think people have seen enough big game hunters happily posing with dead animals wrapped around them. Plus, with stricter laws for possession of animal body parts, poachers will find less value in ripping the tusks off the faces of elephants because the market is shrinking. Criminals like al-Shabab, al-Qaeda and the Lord's Resistance army who terrorize humans as well as animals will have fewer customers in their trade as animal trinkets are devalued. Other states and countries are working on these laws as well. Kenya banned trophy hunting 40 years ago and Botswana two years ago. But other key countries in Africa profit from the slaughter. According to "Transparency International" Zimbabwe, Zambia and Tanzania are three of the most corrupt countries in the world and money from trophy hunters fuels the corruption. So it's up to us to ban endangered animals body parts from entering Connecticut so we won't be partners with cruelty and corruption.

With Cecil's law, people who give their lives to protect these animals will have an ally with us because we are bravely standing with them to save creatures who are dying daily. The rangers and other heroic people, who protect the endangered ones, need our support. Just a month ago, a beloved young helicopter pilot who flew missions to track poachers was gunned down and killed. Our work here will help others like him to fulfill his legacy.

Thank you for hearing Cecil's law and please know the immense value of this passing out of committee.

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