



**HUMANE SOCIETY  
INTERNATIONAL**



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY  
OF THE UNITED STATES**

February 21, 2020

Environment Committee  
Room 3200, Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106  
(860) 240-0440; [envtestimony@cga.ct.gov](mailto:envtestimony@cga.ct.gov)

**Re: SUPPORT (with amendment) HB 5104, AN ACT PROHIBITING THE IMPORT, SALE, AND POSSESSION OF AFRICAN ELEPHANTS, LIONS, LEOPARDS, BLACK RHINOCEROS, WHITE RHINOCEROS AND GIRAFFES**

Dear Co-Chair Cohen, Co-Chair Demicco, Vice Chair Kushner, Vice Chair Gresko, Ranking Member Miner, Ranking Member Harding, and Honorable Members of the Environment Committee,

Many species, not just elephants and rhinos, are facing a myriad of threats, with more and more species being identified as in danger of extinction. For instance, the massive depletion of wild giraffe populations in Africa has been dubbed the “silent extinction.” Their populations have dwindled to around 97,000, a loss of nearly 40 percent over the last 30 years, according to a 2015 estimate by the International Union for Conservation of Nature. According to a petition<sup>1</sup> filed by the Humane Society of the United States, Humane Society International and our partner groups with the Department of Interior seeking endangered status for giraffes under the U.S. Endangered Species Act, between 2006 and 2015, the U.S. imported 3,744 giraffe hunting trophies and 21,402 giraffe bone carvings, 4,789 bones, and 3,008 skin pieces.

The giraffe is just the latest example of species threatened by trade in their parts. Savanna elephant populations declined by 30 percent (equal to 144,000 elephants) between 2007 and 2014 due to poaching to supply the illegal ivory trade. The African lion population declined by 43% between 1993 and 2014 in part due to poorly regulated trophy hunting. And the black rhino has declined by an estimated 97.6% since 1960 with numbers bottoming out at 2,410 in 1995.

Poaching, loss and degradation of habitat, and retaliatory killings are among the many factors contributing to the decimation of many African wild animals. Trophy hunting adds an additional

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<sup>1</sup> <http://blog.humanesociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Giraffe-ESA-Petition-final-rev-1.pdf>

threat to the animals. Given that the U.S. is the world's largest importer of hunting trophies of African elephants, lions, leopards, rhinos and other species, it behooves us to take action to reduce our participation in this unsustainable practice.

We support the intent of the bill but have a few concerns with the current language and would be happy to offer amendments.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



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