



TESTIMONY IN **SUPPORT OF HB 5104**
AN ACT PROHIBITING THE IMPORT, SALE AND POSSESSION OF AFRICAN
ELEPHANTS, LIONS, LEOPARDS, BLACK RHINOCEROS, WHITE RHINOCEROS
AND GIRAFFES

February 18, 2020

To: Honored Chairs Sen. Cohen and Rep. Demicco and Distinguished Members of the Environment Committee

From: Lori Brown, Connecticut League of Conservation Voters

On behalf of the Connecticut League of Conservation Voters (CTLCV), thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony **IN SUPPORT of HB 5104** to prohibit the import, sale and possession of African Elephants, Lions, Leopards, Black Rhinoceros, White Rhinoceros, and Giraffes.

Poaching has decimated the population of African elephants, lions, leopards, black rhinoceros, white rhinoceros, and giraffes. These animals are **critical to maintaining the ecological biodiversity of their regions.**

While poaching has been made illegal in many African countries, many Westerners indulge in survivalist fantasies by participating in legal trophy hunting missions to kill endangered species and take home trophy hides. While many trophy hunters claim the money they spend goes towards local conservation efforts, a study found that **only 3% of trophy hunting revenue is used for conservation related activities.** Trophy hunting also enables illegal poaching by creating a legal market for poachers to sell their goods. Since South Africa began allowing trophy hunting in 2004, **poaching has increased by over 5000%.**

The majority of lions killed for sport can be attributed to American tourists. **From 2005-2015, Connecticut residents killed thirty-nine lions and one giraffe,** then proceeded to import their trophies. Additional permits were obtained by Connecticut residents to hunt and kill African elephants in Botswana, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe. Not only does this relationship reflect an abuse of these animals, but it has also contributed to instability and economic dependency in many of these regions. **Illegal poaching is also a major source of funding for criminal organizations and terrorist groups.**

The United States currently has no protections in place for giraffes and insufficient protection in place for African elephants, lions, leopards and rhinoceros. **Connecticut must step up and do its part to protect delicate ecosystems, thwart illegal poachers, stabilize local economies, and cut off funding to terrorist and criminal groups.**

We at CTLCV urge the committee to **SUPPORT HB 5104**, and pass a statewide ban on the

import, sale and possession of the “Big Six African species”. Thank you for your consideration as you deliberate on this bill.

Sincerely,

Lori Brown
Executive Director
CTLCV
553 Farmington Avenue, Suite 201 Hartford, CT 06105
ctlcv.org | ctlcv@ctlcv.org