



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT of SB 294
AN ACT PROHIBITING THE SALE OF IVORY AND RHINOCEROS HORN IN THE STATE

March 3, 2020

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

From: Lori Brown, Connecticut League of Conservation Voters

On behalf of CTLCV, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony **IN SUPPORT of SB 294** to prohibit the sale of ivory and rhinoceros horn in the state.

Elephant and rhinoceros poaching is a brutal practice in which tusks and horns are harvested off the faces of sometimes still-living animals. This violence is not only directed towards animals as the ivory industry has claimed the lives of over 1,000 park rangers across the globe. **The international ivory trade has been linked to both organized crime and terrorist organizations.**

Despite federal laws restricting wildlife trafficking, ivory and other illicit products continue to be smuggled into local and state markets. **Therefore, we must have state laws to compliment federal laws and close loopholes.**

In 2016, federal authorities inspected more than 183,000 shipments of wildlife products. Despite these efforts, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services believe a significant amount of elephant ivory continues to be illegally imported. They also noted that federal law does not regulate commercial activities that occur entirely within a state. SB 294 would close intrastate loopholes and make law enforcement's job easier by complimenting federal action.

New York and New Jersey have passed laws to this effect, and Connecticut must join them in passing a state ban to stop ivory traffickers. As neighboring states take measures to combat wildlife trafficking, products like ivory inevitably move to states with weaker laws and regulations.

It is important to note that SB 294 would NOT criminalize possession of ivory currently owned by Connecticut residents nor prohibit inheritance or noncommercial gifts. It would also not restrict the sale of genuine antiques or musical instruments that meet specific requirements. It would simply make it harder for criminals to move illicit ivory through our state, and therefore **we urge you to vote YES on SB 294.** Thank you for your consideration as you deliberate on this bill.

Sincerely,

Lori Brown
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