

I feel it is important that I reiterate my stance about the H.297 bill as well as address some insinuations and comments made by some advocates of the bill in and outside the media such as:

<http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/news/politics/2015/04/09/vermont-ivory-ban-bill/25548043/>

Please allow me to summarize and reiterate my thinking, feeling, and stance.

1.) I am a (nearly) 62 year old grandfather of a 7 month old beautiful girl, ("Lily") who wants to have her have the opportunity to still see elephants in existence when she grows up. Of course, I also want the same for my (and your) other descendants. I am against the illegal poaching of ivory - which continues to this very day. That is what the advocates of Bill H.97 and I have in common.

2.) HOWEVER, I strongly disagree with the contention that banning the sale (buying and selling) of ivory-containing material within Vermont borders (or even within the USA borders) will stop the poaching of ivory in Africa. (Over 70% of such ivory goes to mainland China and essentially the rest goes to other Far East Asian countries as well as Spain, New Zealand, and Turkey).

3.) I strenuously object to the seeming insinuation (if not outright accusations, such as those in the above media article) as well as at least some of the advocates and sponsors of the bill that owners of ivory-containing items and articles (regardless of its age) are somehow uncaring, greedy, thoughtless people who have no conscience.

4.) I am the owner and player of a 1915 Steinway Model M Piano (which has ivory keys). I did not buy the piano due to the ivory. I bought it because of the manufacturer's reputation as well as the quality of construction and the sound it produces when I play. Many pianos at that time were made with ivory keys. At one time in the past, ivory (and elephants) may have been considered an appropriately harvested resource - such as cows, camels, etc. Of course, now, especially with the illegal killing of elephants for its ivory (and the threat of the continued existence of the species), it is not.

5.) I have been a member of Chess Collectors International for well over 17 years. I am a chess collector who has been - for nearly 22 years - collecting chess sets (of various materials, themes, and ages) from around the world. I have well over 140 chess sets. About 25-30 are ivory; *however, at least 25 of those are between 100 and 200 years old.* I do not / did not collect them due to their ivory content, but rather, for their historical value as well as the carving quality. There are and have been many ivory chess sets that I have passed by.

By the way, I also have one mammoth ivory chess set. The age of that set is over 10,000 years old. Mammoth are extinct. How does the banning of mammoth ivory (already extinct) stop the current poaching of ivory in Africa?

I have been a chess player since about the age of 6, and as a writing contributor of several articles to the International and USA Magazines / newsletters for the past several years. I wrote my most recent article (about *pewter* chess sets from one designer/American company) as recently as two days ago!

6.) *The proposed bill essentially would make criminals out of currently law-abiding citizens. The proposed ban would not only NOT stop the poaching - it would hurt (caring) citizens such as myself. While I did not buy the piano and the chess sets specifically for "investment", I had been hoping and planning that the time, effort, and money I have spent could be beneficial to my own adult children and grandchildren when I die.*

The proposed ban is not only unfair to me and other law abiding citizens. It is also extremely one sided, short sighted, and arbitrary.

7.) The goal of stopping the poaching of ivory is, I believe, a black and white issue. However, the means of achieving that goal is not (and should not be seen and acted upon) as a black and white issue.

Rather than working against each other, why not join forces in an attempt to arrive at a mutually agreeable approach. I (and others) have numerous ideas - most of those ideas can and should be focused in Africa, and some here in the USA.

Divided, we are less effective in stopping the killing of elephants in Africa. We are and can be more effective if and when we join forces.

8.) Once again, the focus of stopping the poaching of ivory should be in Africa. (Even President Obama, in his wisdom for seeing where the focus of problems should be, thought that the focus should be in Africa *when the Ebola situation presented itself to the world*. While the ivory and elephant problem is not - of course, exactly the same problem or situation, there are a few parallels).

Thank you, Mr. Macaig, Ms. French, Ms. Ryerson, and Mr. MacDonald, for your attention and consideration!

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