

September 18, 2020. **Re: H.99 (Trade in covered animal parts or products)**

Dear Senators.

I would like to express my opposition to H.99 and any very similar Bill or document that the Vermont Senate might consider. I am a Vermont citizen and voter; I am 67 years old. I am the owner (and player) of a Steinway Grand Piano which has ivory keys *as well as the owner and chess collector of well over 100 chess sets. I have been collecting chess sets for over 26 years. I am also a chess player - since the age of 5)*

H.99 is a Bill of an extreme measure and character and it should not have been passed for several reasons. The Bill contains some significant deficits in understanding and reasoning, and is based upon some unrealistic assumptions and expectations. Please do not support such a Bill.

Among the reasons for my opposition are the following:

- 1.) There is a lack of evidence to support that there is trade in illegal ivory in Vermont and that there is a problem with that. This includes a lack of evidence for arrests concerning such illegally obtained ivory. Exactly where is the problem in Vermont?
- 2.) Documentation for antique (or even vintage) items of ivory (e.g. elephant, whale, mammoth, and mastodon - as to age, date of purchase, etc.) has not been required by U.S. law for centuries and even most of the decades of the 1900's. Such documentation does not exist for the overwhelming majority of ivory in Vermont. This places the owner (or seller or buyer) of ivory in an unacceptable and (frankly) extremely unfair position.
- 3.) I consider part of my inheritance to my adult children and grandchildren to include the monetary value of my piano and my chess collection. Among the over 100 chess sets within my collection, I have some that are of bone, mammoth ivory, and elephant ivory. (These sets are from between the late 1700's and 1940.... and yet, I do not have documentation to show that they are that old – or that the ivory for them was brought into the country “legally.” *As an expert in chess sets, I have knowledge of when a particular chess set was made, relatively speaking – that is, within about 10 -20 years of being made.* **All of my chess sets (and my piano) were purchased legally. They were all made before the 1989 “Cites” law.** But again, since I (and I would bet that nearly all other owners) have no “documentation” to show that they are that old or exactly when they were purchased, I am treated unfairly. Such documentation was never before required. BTW, I do not have ivory sets for the sake of their ivory. I have them for their history, their artistic carving and turning.
- 4.) Why would or should mammoth and mastodon (fossil) ivory be included when the animals have been extinct for thousands of years? There is currently scientific ability to discern the difference between elephant ivory and fossil ivory. Of my several (antique/vintage) ivory sets, I do have one mammoth ivory chess set.
- 5.) The production of ivory-keyed pianos ended in the 1940's. A piano's serial number (if it has one) can indicate when a piano was made, but it does not show that the ivory used to cover the keys

(even those from over 100 years ago – or 70 years ago) was obtained legally. Such documentation does not exist because it was all legal back then (1800's – mid 1900's).

- 6.) Regardless, if pianos and other instruments are allowed to have ivory keys, (and that is even if the owner does not necessarily play the piano!... and wants to sell or buy the piano) then where is the fairness with respect to the owner (*and player!*) of an antique or vintage ivory chess sets not being able to buy or sell the chess set?
- 7.) Some vintage and antique ivory chess sets are more than the proposed H.99 limit of 200 grams. Exactly how and why was the 200 grams arbitrarily chosen?
- 8.) There is a lack of widespread and adequate evidence from reputable authorities to show that banning ivory will stop or reduce the killing of elephants. In fact, there is an increase in the elephant population in a number of African countries.

Therefore, I respectfully request (as a player and collector, as well as a reasonable person – and a voter) that you oppose H.99 as currently written. I am not opposed to a reasonable bill regarding ivory – but this current H.99 Bill is anything but reasonable and fair. In addition, it will not stop the illegal killing and poaching of ivory – despite the implied claims of the proponents.

Thank you.

John A. Mazzucco, Randolph Center, Vermont