



**Ohio Senate**  
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**Committees:**

Transportation, Commerce and Labor, Chair  
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State and Local Government  
Ways and Means  
Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review

**Sponsor Testimony on Senate Resolution 589**  
**Energy and Natural Resources Committee**  
**November 15, 2016**

Chairman Balderson, Vice Chair Jones, Ranking Member Gentile, and distinguished members of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony this afternoon on Senate Resolution 589 which encourages the federal government to fully implement and enforce rules adopted by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to curb the slaughter of the African elephant and to severely restrict the illegal African ivory trade in the U.S.

Last fall, I traveled to Botswana and Namibia and witnessed the impact of poaching. I saw how diligently officials in these countries have been working to address this problem—but this problem has two components, supply and demand. Some experts estimate that on average ninety-six elephants are slaughtered each day for their ivory. Coincidental to my trip, a dedicated and passionate constituent of mine proposed action at the state level to help end the illegal ivory trade.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service adopted rules, pursuant to the Endangered Species Act of 1973, to increase protection for African elephants in response to the alarming rise in poaching to fuel the growing illegal trade in ivory. The poaching crisis is driven by demand for elephant ivory. These reforms will provide for more strict regulation of the trade in African elephant ivory and help to ensure that the U.S. ivory market is not contributing to the poaching of elephants in Africa. Improved domestic controls will make it more difficult to launder illegal elephant ivory through U.S. markets, which will contribute to a reduction in the slaughter of African elephants.

These regulations, if fully enforced, will help prevent illegal wildlife products from entering the supply chain, which are fueling a world-wide surge of organized crime, militant groups, including terrorist organizations, and illegal trafficking of ivory. This undermines security around the globe and threatens to push to extinction one of the world's most iconic species, the African elephant. The Ohio Senate should encourage the federal government to fully enforce these rules and do its best to ensure illegal ivory is removed from market circulation. In preparing this resolution, I consulted with the Cleveland Orchestra, the Cleveland Natural History Museum, the Cleveland Museum of Art and Ivory Free Ohio. The accredited zoos of Ohio all support this resolution.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this afternoon. I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have.