

My name is Mick Brown. I am a Master Class falconer and President of the Ohio Falconry Association. I am asking you to consider Senate Bill 28. This bill, if passed, would allow for the use of owls in the practice of falconry.

Currently, Ohio falconers are permitted to use a variety of native and non-native raptor species. This would simply add the owl species to the list of currently permitted birds.

There are several benefits this bill could provide to Ohio. First, birds of prey have an 80% mortality rate during their first year of life. When a raptor is under the care of a falconer it is almost certain to survive and develop successful hunting skills. These birds are often released back to the breeding population once mature. Many injured owls are taken to rehabilitation facilities throughout the state. This bill would allow these rehabilitated birds to be trained and hunted prior to release increasing their chance at survival.

Second, Ohio falconers not only hunt with raptors but also volunteer their time to educate the public on birds of prey and their protection. Allowing the use of Owls would diversify these educational opportunities. Many Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Nature conservancy groups and Ohio school children have benefited from these educational activities.

Last, there could be additional revenue to the state of Ohio through the purchase of raptor trapping permits, falconry and hunting licenses as well as revenue from out of state falconers visiting and hunting in Ohio.

Thank you for your time and consideration on behalf of the licensed falconers in Ohio