



# **SPORTSMAN'S ALLIANCE of MAINE**

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## Testimony in Support of LD 703 and LD 753

LD 703, "RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Protect the People's Right to Hunt, Fish and Harvest Wildlife"

LD 753, "RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Establish the Right to Hunt and Fish"

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

Presented by David Trahan, Executive Director, Sportsman's Alliance of Maine

April 8, 2015

Senator Davis, Representative Shaw, and distinguished members of the Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, I am David Trahan, Executive Director of the Sportsman's Alliance of Maine testifying in support of the concept in both LD 703, "RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Protect the People's Right to Hunt, Fish and Harvest Wildlife" and LD 753, "RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Establish the Right to Hunt and Fish."

When this nation was founded in 1776 the ownership and management of our wildlife was placed in the public trust. Any citizen of our free nation was capable of living off the land and wildlife, taking deer, moose and birds for sustenance purposes; unlike the King of England, Americans owned the wildlife. No one living in 1776 could have imagined that Americans would have to fight animal rights organizations for the opportunity to hunt wildlife, but that is the case in 2015.

In colonial days there were no Fish and Wildlife Departments, fishing, hunting or trapping licenses. There were no controls on the commercial harvest and sale of wild animals. Fish, deer, ducks and animals of all sorts were exploited for profit and by the early 1900's many animals species were faced with extinction.

By the late 1930's, conservationists and sportsmen of conscience recognized that wildlife populations could not sustain such exploitation and in September of 1937, then President Roosevelt signed the Pitman-Robertson Act, an excise tax on outdoor gear. The proceeds of this tax has since collected over \$2.5 billion to be distributed to

states to create wildlife protection agencies like our Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Department. These 3-1 federal dollars are triggered by fees and licenses paid by sportsmen in the states and their combined dollars are used to hire biologists and wildlife managers, purchase wildlife habitat and manage all wildlife, including endangered species. The very existence of the legislature's Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife owes its creation to the Pitman Robertson Act.

Since 1937, the Pitman Robertson Act, funded by sportsmen, has been credited with restoring whitetail deer, black bears, cougar and wood duck populations across the nation. The PRA is woven into the fabric of our Nation's commitment to conserving and protecting wildlife, the very core of this movement are the license fees paid by sportsmen.

The Humane Society of the United States and its Director Wayne Pacelle are on a national crusade to end all hunting starting in the early 1990's when Mr. Pacelle ran our nation's largest anti-hunting group, Friends of Animals. This was his promise to his followers:

"We are going to use the ballot box and the democratic process to stop all hunting in the United States ... we will take it species by species until all hunting is stopped in California. Then we will take it state by state." (*Full Cry* magazine, Oct. 1990.) Wayne Pacelle.

To his credit, he has kept his word. Unable to win battles in state legislatures, he and his organization have led dozens of referendum campaigns across the country to stop wildlife management practices and re-establish and protect wolf populations. Maine is a target of their efforts because we have one of the most liberal referendum systems in the country. Of the 24 states with referendums, Maine has no geographical requirements to collect signatures, 13 states do. Half our population is confined to a few counties in the south. In addition, we are a cheap media market and a relatively poor state that struggles to raise money. For wealthy organizations promoting a national agenda we are easy pickings, ground zero for media exploitation.

Ironically, the Maine referendum was created in 1908 to allow Maine municipalities to protect their right to control local utility infrastructure, true local control, and has since evolved into a system for outside interests to promote their national agendas.

The latest bear referendum was not a battle about bears it was just the latest clash in a long battle between the well-funded Animal rights movement and the successful Conservation movement created in 1937. The animal

rights movement believes predators like bear and wolves can manage wildlife and that human hunters are unnecessary. In order for the animal rights movement to succeed, it must first eliminate hunting as a management tool.

If some in the animal rights movement had their way, we would return to the days when the government banned citizens from harvesting all wildlife, don't believe me, this is a direct quote from Wayne Pacelle, HSUS Director himself "*animals could live without being manipulated by people, Thereafter, natural regulation of ungulates and prey, with humans trying their utmost to be no more than observers,*" became the management model he has advocated.

They call us cruel, inhumane, demonize us in the eyes of the public; yet, for the last 90 years we have been the protectors of our wildlife. The very same people that pushed the bear referendum are accusing this committee of being stacked to promote the commercial exploitation of bears and other wildlife and call us, the Sportsman's Alliance of Maine the "powerful hunting lobby". Do not take the bait, you and we the sportsmen are the product of nearly one hundred years of sound conservation. I beg of you, do not be ashamed of the fact that you hunt or consider yourself a sportsman, I certainly am not.

We believe the time has come that the rights of citizen's to hunt, fish and manage wildlife be enshrined in the Constitution, please support language that achieves this goal.

Excerpt from the Book *Bloodties*, 1990, Author, Ted Kerasote

KERASOTE: Wayne told the senior member of America's animal rights movement that he had no salary requirements, and no constraints on his travel, or the time he would invest. The only thing he wanted to do was develop a national anti-hunting campaign. Capitalizing on America's increasing urban populations, who have little day-to-day intimacy with wildlife, he has successfully halted proposed hunts through the courts and the ballot, most notably in California. He has also organized "Hunt Sabs" in the East, sabotages or disruptions of legal hunts on public lands, the object of which is to scare animals away from hunters while simultaneously talking to them about the wrongness of what they are doing. He has been arrested 14 times.

Before

Statement on Wild Animals : The Humane Society of the United States

www.humanesociety.org/about/policy\_statements/statement\_wild\_animals.html?credit=web\_id9548055&web\_global/footer/Hunting

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### Hunting

- Marine mammals
- Non-native wildlife
- Predator control
- Trapping and fur ranching
- Wild animals as pets
- Wild mustangs and burros
- Zoos and aquariums

### Endangered species

The survival of wildlife species is increasingly threatened by a number of anthropogenic factors, including habitat loss and degradation, over-hunting and over-fishing, introduced diseases and parasites, attempts to eradicate "pest" species, and capture for the pet trade. The demise of any species is an irreparable loss that deprives the world of a unique creature and the role that creature plays in its ecosystem. The HSUS is committed to protecting threatened and endangered species and their habitats by pressing the U.S. Department of the Interior to aggressively implement and enforce the Endangered Species Act of 1973 as amended in every way possible.

We also urge international federal, and state wildlife agencies and officials to broaden their programs for the protection and recovery of threatened and endangered species and their habitats, and we encourage private citizens to assist in preserving habitats where such species are known to reside.

### Hunting

As a matter of principle, The HSUS opposes the hunting of any living creature for fun, trophy, or sport because of the animal trauma, suffering, and death that result. A humane society should not condone the killing of any sentient creature in the name of sport.

As a practical matter, The HSUS actively seeks to eliminate the most inhumane and unfair sport hunting practices, such as the use of body-gripping traps, baiting, use of dogs, pigeon shoots, stocking of animals for shooting, and fee-hunting on enclosed properties.

Unfortunately, the welfare of animals may, on occasion, necessitate the killing of wildlife. When such killing is permitted, it must be used as a last resort, be demonstrably necessary, and be conducted by responsible officials, and the methods utilized must result in an instantaneous and humane death.

The legitimate needs of human subsistence may also sometimes necessitate the killing of wildlife. In such cases, killing should be accomplished in a humane and non-wasteful manner. Individuals of endangered or threatened species must be protected from subsistence hunting.

After

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### Hunting

The HSUS seeks to build a humane society that will move toward protecting and celebrating wildlife, and will develop humane solutions to wildlife conflicts through innovation. The HSUS actively works to eliminate the most inhumane and unfair sport hunting practices, such as the use of body-gripping traps and snares; bear baiting; the hound hunting of bears, bobcats, mountain lions and wolves; contest killing events; and captive-hunting on fenced properties. We oppose live pigeon shoots and other forms of staged hunting where the animals are bred or stocked simply to be shot as living targets. We also oppose the trophy hunting of rare or endangered populations and the use of lead ammunition, since less toxic alternatives are workable and available in the marketplace.

### Marine mammals

The HSUS opposes the killing of marine mammals for commercial, sport, ceremonial, "nuisance management," and other non-subsistence purposes—for example, the harpooning of whales, clubbing of seals, drowning of porpoises and other marine mammals in fishing nets and gear, and shooting of marine mammals from fishing and other commercial vessels with rifles. We also oppose the chase, capture, and confinement of wild marine mammals in marine parks and aquariums because such activities result in considerable animal suffering.

The HSUS therefore supports measures to protect all marine mammals by:

1. Supporting a total ban on all commercial whaling (as adopted by the International Whaling Commission); and the imposition of sanctions against those nations that refuse to comply with the ban
2. Supporting a total ban on all commercial seal hunts, including the harp and hooded seal hunt in Canada

