

Rep. Cochran offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 419.

A resolution to urge Michigan residents and businesses to comply with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and not buy or sell ivory of unknown origin.

Whereas, The sale of newly harvested African elephant ivory has been banned since 1989. The United States and 182 other countries have signed onto the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora prohibiting these sales, and the United States has adopted laws and regulations; and

Whereas, Despite the ban, tens of thousands of African elephants and rhinoceroses are being slaughtered in Africa each year by poachers intent on selling their ivory. It has been reported that family clusters of elephants are being slaughtered by automatic weapons in Africa, and the rhinoceros population has been similarly decimated throughout Africa as criminal gangs kill rhinoceroses for ivory; and

Whereas, The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora noted that elephant slaughter has reached crisis proportions. The most comprehensive scientific survey ever has found that the population declined by 144,000 elephants between 2007 and 2014, a 30 percent loss. In recent years, it is estimated that 8 percent of the population is lost each year, primarily to poaching; and

Whereas, African elephants and rhinoceroses are nearing extinction. Scientists believe the population of elephants and rhinoceroses cannot withstand this slaughter; and

Whereas, The demand for ivory in the United States and other countries is driving the illegal trafficking of ivory and the decline in elephants and rhinoceroses. A 2016 analysis found that global ivory seizures have tripled since 2007. Eliminating this demand is crucial to saving African elephants and rhinoceroses; and

Whereas, Federal law allows African ivory to be legally sold within Michigan as jewelry, figurines, and antiques if it was imported before 1989 with proper documentation. It may be sold or purchased across state lines if it is an antique that is at least one hundred years old or if it is a small part of certain larger manufactured or handcrafted items; and

Whereas, The illegal sale of new products containing ivory continues to be a problem in the United States. Despite the international and national bans, a 2008 study found that one-third of ivory products sold in the United States may have had illegal origins. More and more, that market may be moving online. According to the International Fund for Animal Welfare, the black market trade of ivory is skyrocketing through internet sales, including within the United States; and

Whereas, Strict compliance with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora as it relates to the ban on the sale of ivory products will contribute to protecting African elephants and rhinoceroses from extinction; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we urge Michigan residents and businesses to comply with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and not buy or sell ivory of unknown origin; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Governor, the Attorney General of Michigan, and the Michigan Chamber of Commerce.