

# Conservation controversies in hunting for sport

After Trump brings up big game trophies, the debate on hunting has just started to heat up  
by Lexi Shoup

Soon after the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) moved to lift former president Obama's ban on the imports of elephant trophies from Zimbabwe and Zambia, President Donald Trump tweeted his intentions to reverse the lifting of the ban.

The Obama administration put the original ban in place because the FWS found that the hunts were in no way contributing to the survival of the elephants in those areas, an argument used by many trophy hunters.

When the FWS announced they would to lift the ban, the news was poorly received by the public.

Two days after the announcement, President Trump tweeted, "Put big game trophy decision on hold until such time as I review all conservation facts. Under study for years. Will update soon with Secretary Zinke. Thank you!"

While a final decision has not yet been made on whether or not the ban will be lifted, the proposal has sparked heated conversation about the ethics of hunting, both for sport and for survival.

New Trier senior Patrick Helle, who has been hunting since he was 10, has received criticism in the past.

"People have criticized me for hunting but to that I usually respond that hunting actually contributes a lot to the conservation of endangered wildlife," he said.

Helle usually hunts pheasant and elk, and he recently participated in a trophy hunt in Mongolia. "I think that trophy hunting can be



A man hunting in rural Minnesota dressed in full camouflage, which takes away a Turkey's main line of defense, eyesight | AP Images

good when it's implemented right. Although it was a trophy hunt, all the extra meat went to the villagers nearby and the money went to conservation of wildlife."

Although Helle defended the practice of hunting, he draws the line at big game.

"When it's hunting for lions or other large predators, I feel like it's unethical because you can't really eat them and it doesn't benefit other wildlife," said Helle.

Many people tolerate hunting to a certain extent. Senior Nadia James believes that hunting for survival is completely fine, but hunting for sport is unethical and unnecessary.

"I have cousins who hunt turkey each year. I went with them once and the experience was fun but it was really hard for me to see the animals die. It helped that my cousins used

the whole turkey. They ate it as their Thanksgiving meal, so at least it died for a cause," said James.

James does not support trophy hunting, however.

"I don't see why people go to Africa to kill elephants. They don't usually eat them. They're just killing an animal to brag about it and take pictures with it. Even if they justify killing it by saying they're using the ivory, that still doesn't make sense to me," said James.

Senior Kelly Allison thinks perspective is the most important thing to have when forming opinions about hunting, "Personally, I think hunting for sustenance is necessary and I disagree with anybody who believes otherwise," she said.

"I used to be an avid supporter, but I was always uneasy about the actual process of taking the life away

from a living thing. I really took advantage of where my food came from. It was pretty ignorant of me to just turn the other cheek because it didn't involve me directly," said Allison.

When she went to Hawaii to visit family, she went wild boar hunting with them for the experience.

Allison's feelings about hunting didn't change, but she gained a new respect for people who hunt their own food.

"It made me realize how easy I have it that I don't have to do that whenever I want to have a pork chop. If you want to take a side on this issue, try and gain as much perspective as you can because you never know how you'll think in the end," Allison said.

Some hunting criticism is not

focused on the animals, but instead on the guns.

"People should be able to hunt because stopping them from hunting is limiting their rights. However, I don't think people need semi-automatic weapons to go hunting. Automatic weapons are not necessary to hunt for sport," said junior Lilly Meehan-Egan.

Only a few states in the US have completely banned semi-automatic weapons. "California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey and New York. In addition, Minnesota and Virginia regulate assault weapons," according to the Giffords Law Center website.

While the state of Illinois doesn't have a ban in place, Cook County does.

# Bumpstock debate hits legislatures around the country

After Las Vegas shooting, many state and federal officials question legality of bumpstocks

by May Podder

According to WTTW Chicago Tonight, state rep. Marty Moylan's bill to ban "bump stocks" did not pass on Oct 26 failing by a vote of 48-54.

Moylan's bill came about in response to the Las Vegas shooting. "Bump stocks" are gun attachments increase the speed at which semiautomatic rifles can fire.

CNN reported that the Vegas shooter, Steven Paddock, allegedly used bump stocks to kill dozens and injure hundreds.

The bill, otherwise known as House Bill 4117 would prohibit any gun add-ons that inhibit different rate of fire accelerations.

The gun ban would affect a considerable number of gun-owners. Representative Jerry Costello, D-Smithton told CNN, "I believe that this particular bill covers 40 to 50 percent of guns owned by law-abiding citizens in the state of Illinois."

This law could also affect recreational activities because it does not discriminate against what the gun is used for.

"[Moylan's bill would have affected] Guns that are used for hunting, [and] guns that are used for



Senator Richard Blumenthal (D, Connecticut) speaks at a senate committee to ban bumpstocks | AP Images

competition purposes. I can tell you that probably 40 percent of the guns I own would fall into this bill, I use them for hunting. Hunting only," said Costello.

The bill would have also inhibited the availability of gun-use to people with disabilities; people who need the extra modifications to use guns.

Representative and southern Illinois lawmaker Teri Bryant, R-Murphysboro told the Chicago Tribune, "It's about whether someone with a disability is actually

able to use a firearm. This piece of legislation... would also control common gunsmithing items such as triggers, springs, slides, firing pins, bolts, buffers, muzzle-breaks and we could go on and on."

Not all representatives were against passing the bill.

In response to the alleged plans the Las Vegas shooter made to attack Lollapalooza, Representative Chris Welch, D-Hillside, told The Chicago Tribune, "We all know someone who attended Lollapalooza. The question is, what will it take for us to take

action? Will it take your mother, father, son or daughter to be shot before you will speak up?"

There was an alternate bill with the support of the NRA that the Chicago Tribune reported, proposed by Barbara Wheeler, R-Crystal Lake. This bill proposed to solely ban bump stocks, leaving out the other gun add-ons.

Since Moylan's bill's rejection, the New York Times has reported that the national fight has slowed to ban bump stocks.

They reported that the National

Rifle Association and Republican party now rely on the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, otherwise known as A.T.F., to move forward with action, despite their original support for stricter gun regulations.

National advocacy group Everytown for Gun Safety president John Feinblatt said, "Their original statement was a wink and a nod by saying that it should be something that A.T.F. reviewed. They knew very well that was an effort to divert attention from legislation."

Illinois isn't the only state with ideas to ban bump stocks. Fox 5 DC reported that a state lawmaker in Georgia has pre-filed legislation to ban the use and possession of bump stocks in Georgia.

New Jersey, on the other hand, was able to move forward with the legislation. US News & World Reports stated that several states, including Massachusetts and California, have passed legislation against bump stocks and other implements.

Even the bump stock debate has been stalled by the NRA and A.T.F., states will continue to look into it, especially because of the great repercussions it can cause.

But the fight is still going on. Republican Senator John Cornyn said, "If you believe that automatic weapons should be highly regulated and limited, then why would you be against banning a device that makes a gun an automatic weapon?"