

Before the House Federal and State Affairs Committee
January 26, 2016
HCR 5008
Mike Murray and Karin Brownlee on behalf of the
Kansas State Rifle Association

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

The over 5,000 members of the Kansas State Rifle Association (KSRA) stand in strong support of HCR 5008 which would amend the Kansas Constitution to guarantee the right to hunt, fish and trap. HCR 5008 is a legislative priority in 2016 for the KSRA.

As you know, HCR 5008 was co-authored by Representative Adam Lusker and former Representative Travis Couture-Lovelady.

Passage of an amendment such as is proposed in HCR 5008 is not unprecedented. Vermont was the first to do so in 1777 and 18 other states have followed suit including Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. Florida and New Hampshire have done so by statute. And California's constitutional amendment protects the right to fish.

Pheasant and quail hunting is a family tradition for me. I've hunted since I was twelve with my dad and now with my son and many relatives and friends. The second weekend in November, which is opening weekend of pheasant season, was and still is a time for us to reunite, enjoy the camaraderie and the annual early morning trek to the field.

According to a 2008 National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) article there are a number of threats to this great Kansas tradition and heritage. NCSL cites increasing urbanization, decreased habitat, declining numbers of sportsmen, pressure from other recreational groups such as hikers and off-road vehicle enthusiasts as threats to the land available for hunting and fishing. In addition the NCSL article stated other factors of concern to sportsmen include well-organized animal rights groups (which oppose hunting) and potential limitations on methods of hunting, hunting seasons and bag limits for certain game species.

The KSRA respectfully urges your favorable consideration of HCR 5008.