



March 7, 2016

Chairman Ralph Ostmeyer and Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs
Kansas Senate
300 SW 10th Ave.
Topeka, KS 66612

RE: HCR 5008 – A Constitutional Amendment Relating to the Right to Hunt, Fish, and Trap Wildlife

Position: SUPPORT

Dear Chairman Ostmeyer and Members of the Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs:

On behalf of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF), I am writing to express our support of House Concurrent Resolution 5008 (HCR 5008), the proposed constitutional amendment that guarantees the right of Kansans to hunt, fish and trap wildlife by traditional methods. A constitutional amendment, especially for a state like Kansas which has such a strong sporting tradition, is needed to protect our hunting and fishing heritage for future generations. Many states with the same strong sporting traditions have faced costly court battles in a number of cases challenging their authority and their methods to manage their fish and wildlife resources. Furthermore, anti-sportsmen's organizations often lead the public to believe that hunting, fishing and the ethical harvest of our wildlife resources through traditional means are only a privilege subject to social pressures and prevailing public sentiments rather than an inherent right.

CSF recognizes the significant, positive economic impact of sportsmen and women who directly support conservation through responsible harvest and funding for management of fish and wildlife resources. Through the American System of Conservation Funding (ASCF) – a “user-pays, public benefits” model - state-based conservation is primarily paid for by sportsmen and women through their purchases of taxable gear and hunting and fishing licenses. In 2015 alone, Kansas sportsmen and women, through the ASCF, generated \$44,065,389 for the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism.

To understand just how important hunting and fishing are to Kansas, one need only look at the most recent numbers from the US Fish & Wildlife Service. In 2011, 527,000 residents and non-residents participated in hunting and fishing across Kansas, spending \$629 million pursuing their outdoor passions. Supporting over 9,300 jobs and generating \$69 million in state and local taxes, hunting and fishing are not

only important culturally to the people of Kansas, but also provide a significant and reliable economic engine for the state.

Currently 19 states have the right to hunt and fish in their state's respective constitutions. The precedent for constitutional protection of our outdoor heritage was first set back in 1777 when Vermont recognized the need to guarantee this right for their citizens in the very beginning of their statehood. If successful, Kansas would be the 20th state to give their citizens the same constitutional protection.

We urge the Committee to accept HCR 5008 and allow the people of Kansas the opportunity to protect and secure the future of fishing, hunting and wildlife conservation for current and future generations of Kansans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chris Horton".

Chris Horton
Midwestern States Director
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation