



**STATEMENT OF JOHN HOHENWARTER,  
NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION STATE LIAISON,  
ON BEHALF OF THE NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA  
AT HEARING BEFORE SENATE GAME & FISHERIES COMMITTEE,  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION TO ALLOW SUNDAY HUNTING  
MAY 18, 2016**

Honorable Members of the Senate Game and Fisheries Committee,

Gun ownership and participation in hunting and the shooting sports are among the strongest of American traditions. For decades more than a million hunters in the Keystone State have taken to the field to enjoy the great outdoors. However, Pennsylvania has seen a decline in number of hunters over recent years . This decline is in part due to a transition in a family life style which is filled with commitments throughout the week. Between work, school and other obligations, Pennsylvania's Sunday hunting restrictions only add to the challenge of getting out into the field.

There are currently two bills before the Pennsylvania General Assembly which are focused to help increase hunter participation by giving discretion to the Pennsylvania Game Commission to expand Sunday hunting relative to seasons and bag limits. Senate Bill 1070, introduced by Senator Brewster (D-45) and House Bill 1374, introduced by state Representatives Frank Farina (D-112) and Robert Godshall (R-53) would undoubtedly invigorate essential hunter recruitment and retention efforts -- key factors in preserving Pennsylvania's hunting heritage for future generations to come.

As you know, the prohibition on Sunday hunting is an old blue law left on the books in just a handful of states. Other outdoor activities are allowed on Sunday, including those that take place on public and private property, such as fishing, hiking and golf. Restrictions on Sunday hunting effectively treat hunters as second-class citizens and tacitly endorse the view of animal extremists that something is wrong with hunting. A view that ignores the fact that hunting is part of America's heritage as well as an important component of wildlife management.

As a result, many hunters are unable to introduce their children or friends to hunting because Saturday is their only opportunity to hunt outside of the work week, and this day is often busy with organized sports and various other commitments. Countless hunters stop hunting because of the lack of opportunity and time restrictions. The addition of an extra day in the field, especially on the weekend, increases the opportunity for those individuals to experience hunting.

Currently, Pennsylvania allows some private landowners to hunt and some varmint hunting on Sundays, however, most of the hunting population are still being ignored. These same hunters have contributed millions of dollars to wildlife conservation programs through the purchase of firearms, ammunition and archery equipment. This Pennsylvania restriction not only impedes hunter recruitment and retention but also rejects the economic benefits hunters provide through the purchase of fuel, food, lodging and dozens of incidentals that go along with a day's hunt.

Furthermore, current law gives a select group of private landowners, whose property is enrolled as a noncommercial regulated hunting ground, the privilege to hunt on Sundays. This law amounts to tens of thousands of acres being hunted on Sundays by landowners who can afford to own and enroll their 100+ acre plots as a noncommercial regulated hunting ground. This exemption, which became law more than a decade ago, only allows those who own large tracts of land the pleasure of hunting on Sundays, while continuing to deny the majority of Pennsylvania hunters the same freedom.

Affording citizens the opportunity to hunt on Sundays does not mandate anyone to participate. This legislation simply would expand Sunday hunting opportunities and give the wildlife experts at the Pennsylvania Game Commission the authority to regulate the seasons, times and bag limits as they do for the other six days of the week.

Pennsylvania has a long and storied history of outdoorsmen, dating back to William Penn himself. To protect and maintain the Keystone State's proud hunting heritage, we must strive to provide increased opportunities and encourage the next generation of hunters.

On behalf of the National Rifle Association of America, I thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter and would ask for your support in this effort.