



IWV Supports Ohio House Joint Resolution 5

November 22, 2023

Ohio House Energy and Natural Resources Committee
1 Capitol Square
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Chairman Kick and Members of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee,

On behalf of Independent Women's Voice, I strongly encourage the passage of Ohio House Joint Resolution 5 (**HJR5**), introduced by State Representatives Ron Ferguson and Nick Santucci, to establish a constitutional right to hunt and fish in Ohio. Independent Women's Voice fights for women and their loved ones by effectively expanding support for policy solutions that aren't just well-intended, but actually enhance people's freedom, opportunities, and well-being.

HJR5 seeks to put a constitutional amendment to enshrine the right to hunt and fish in the state constitution on the 2024 ballot for a vote. This measure, if approved, would preempt future attacks on these cherished American activities. This right should be preserved for Ohioans since it bolsters wildlife management, supports countless jobs, and perpetuates true conservation practices. The amendment also wouldn't stifle existing laws pertaining to trespassing or property rights.

It's no exaggeration to say that hunting and fishing are under attack in America today. Radical entities like **Wildlife for All** are openly calling to reimage state wildlife agencies and divorce hunters and anglers, the largest drivers of conservation funding, from critical conservation decisions. Similarly, groups like the Humane Society have **pushed** anti-hunting legislation—rooted in emotion and not science—in the state capital. **Hunter and angler harassment** is increasingly a problem in Ohio as well. In 2017, a woman was **cited** for yelling at a hunter in a tree stand.

In Ohio, hunting and fishing cumulatively **support** 40,000 jobs and pump \$4.3 billion annually back into the state's economy. If these activities aren't protected, they risk going extinct by incremental bans that ultimately put conservation at risk.

Last year, under the Pittman-Robertson Act, the Buckeye State **received** nearly \$16.5 million in conservation funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Fund (Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson/Wallop-Breaux) to be directed to wildlife conservation, habitat restoration, hunters education, and public target shooting ranges.

Since 1937, **\$27 billion** has been dispersed to all 50 states. Over **\$16 billion** has been generated by excise taxes collected on firearms and ammunition purchases under the Pittman-Robertson Act. Adjusted for inflation, this amount **totals** \$25 billion. A historic **\$1.6 billion** haul was raked in last year. Given the success of this, the Tax Foundation **dubbed** this as a “good excise tax.”

Twenty-three U.S. states currently **enshrine** this right to hunt and fish in their respective state constitutions. Ohio could become the 24th state to take a serious stand for true conservation and these timeless American pastimes.

For all these reasons, we urge all members of the Ohio legislature to work toward the swift passage of HJR5. Independent Women’s Voice thanks the committee for considering our testimony.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gabriella Hoffman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gabriella Hoffman
Director of the Center for Energy and Conservation
Independent Women’s Voice