

TESTIMONY
PENNSYLVANIA STATE GRANGE
SENATE GAME & FISHERIES COMMITTEE HEARING ON SUNDAY HUNTING
Harrisburg, PA
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Chairman Scavello, Chairman Brewster and members of the Senate Game & Fisheries Committee, thank you for receiving testimony from the PA State Grange.

Since 1873, the PA State Grange has represented farm families and consumers in education, advocacy and support of the importance of Pennsylvania Agriculture in both the economy and social fabric of the Commonwealth. Many of our members are avid hunters and a good number of our members do not hunt.

Since 2005 the policy of the PA State Grange has been to oppose expansion of Sunday hunting in Pennsylvania.

Why have we taken this position? Although there are some advocates for allowing Sunday hunting who have suggested that there is an economic benefit, the PA State Grange argues that money is not the only currency. Of equal importance is the value of family.

Quality family time is hard to come by these days. Traditional Sundays as a family have been steadily eroded in today's society. As an example, Sunday soccer or other athletic practice or games have attempted to take over the Sunday morning time that used to be earmarked for church.

One argument used by those seeking to eliminate the Sunday ban says that there are other activities people can enjoy but let hunters do what they enjoy. That's a sound bite, not a real argument.

Sunday is a day where we can relax and enjoy doing what we like. You can go golfing on Sundays. You can go bird watching on Sunday or take your children on a walk in the woods to recreate, enjoy the weather and educate your children about nature. Sundays provide an opportunity to teach our children to fish in our rural streams and ponds. You can go horseback riding on wooded trails. You can do lots of things without hindrance. You can lay out in the yard and do nothing. Sunday is for many a time to relax, have an activity, do yard work, and to take a respite from a hectic week.

The point here is that these activities are not lethal. You won't get killed by an errant golf ball but you could by an accidental discharge of a firearm. The issue is that by allowing hunting on Sundays, there is a greater promise of an unfortunate mishap since there are more people outside. Hunting on Sundays will place them at greater risk.

One consequence of lifting the ban would be to force non-hunters to be more aware, more careful because of a potentially lethal threat outside at the same time. Hunters may enjoy their Sundays but doing so should not curtail everyone else's enjoyment.

Some of us live in mountain environments with multiple bullet holes in our house siding from errant shooting during hunting season. We keep our children inside and even then with trepidation. One day free of that fear is a blessing.

In addition, there are peak agricultural times when farmers are forced to give up leisure activity and work to plant, to spray and to harvest. Farmers who have non-farm jobs during the week have to farm on weekends because there is no other time. Farms adjacent to hunting areas puts men and women engaged in production agriculture in harm's way.

As a matter of public health and safety as well as a family/quality of life matter, Sunday hunting should not be permitted.

Again, on behalf of the PA State Grange, thank you for reviewing this testimony.