

# Unified Sportsmen of Pennsylvania



*"The largest statewide individual membership sporting advocacy organization in the Commonwealth"*

Conservation supported through thousands of voices for hunting, fishing, trapping and our second amendment gun rights.

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## Sunday Hunting Testimony Randy Santucci

Sunday hunting has become a difficult topic to address plausibly when brought up at shows and sporting events across the state by our hunters. With many individuals knowing my sporting involvement with USP and the Corbett advisory council, I get singled out as the "in the know", individual and am often asked "what is the deal with Sunday hunting". Frustrated that I cannot give a sensible answer, I stutter a bit, then do my best to answer that question competently explaining the current state of affairs that are tough to justify. I often fear my credibility falls into question when I ask sportsmen to accept Pennsylvania's prohibition reasons on Sunday hunting, that I myself struggle to digest. Anti-Sunday hunting arguments just do not hold water when evaluated by most reasonably minded individuals. There are many pros and very few cons.

We all know Sunday hunting remains a political football, going back and forth between legislators that recognize the validity of bringing Pennsylvania to align with most of the country, doing the obvious right thing for our state economically, and for our funding sportsmen that pay the freight for most all wildlife management in the Commonwealth. Then there are legislators that do not support Sunday hunting because of some constituents in their districts spin the topic into something problematic, which by overwhelming national example is anything but. For my own research, I have asked many out-of-state hunters to tell me what problems they have with Sunday hunting. They pause...look at me with a puzzled expression and always answer my question with one of their own "what do you mean problems with Sunday hunting?" They don't understand the question because they don't know of any Sunday hunting related problems. Many of these states have a lot more farms and farmers than Pennsylvania with no adverse issues.

We are talking about doubling weekend opportunity for sportsmen, including our children, which can be the only days of the week possible for them to hunt, and with that extra day comes a mountain of benefits that I would like to now outline with as much brevity as possible in bullet point format.

An additional weekend day would....

- Allow parents or mentors that are required to work Saturdays, be able to take their child hunting on Sunday.
- It allows families to juggle commitments on the weekend that often consume Saturday.

Sunday Hunting Testimony Continued  
Randy Santucci

- Previously weekend days were not utilized for community sport schedules. I managed baseball for 8 years. Today with limited field availability, soccer and other sports are now routinely scheduling Saturday games.
- Would be another tool to help stop the drop in hunting license sales.
- Sunday hunting would not add additional pressure to areas with low deer herd numbers. Antler-less allocations would be adjusted by PGC to off-set the extra weekend hunting opportunity. Also it is unlikely most hunters will hunt both days anyway. In fact, spreading weekend opportunity to two days rather than one, will likely improve the hunting experience that now concentrates all hunters into one weekend day.
- Statewide implementation of Sunday hunting would be more beneficial than incremental implementation. Opening only certain areas is likely to congest hunters in those open Sunday hunting areas.
- Private landowners not wanting Sunday hunting can simply post their property "No Sunday Hunting". Private groups or those with strong political lobbying power should not control land use by private land owners, or on public lands taxpayers maintain.
- Why does the state limit hunting on public or private property without valid substantiated facts of problems? All national indicators do not show any problems.
- Significantly improves value to camp owners that incur tax and maintenance costs on their property, as well as travel expenses and travel time to get to their camps. They would be able to hunt an additional day which can be needed with possible inclement weather on Saturday.
- An additional weekend day increases camp owner patronization of rural town businesses.
- Restriction of Sunday hunting carries a negative overtone as if there is something wrong with hunting, this bothers me personally that a wonderful family oriented sport is perceptively disparaged thru this prohibition.
- Religious beliefs are a fallacious argument against Sunday hunting. What better way than attending religious services in the morning with your children, and hunting with them in the afternoon? Many decades ago, strong religious convictions, which made up the fiber of many lawmakers, led to restrictive legislation such as Pennsylvania Blue Laws. Removal of excessive religious indoctrination within our laws is demanded and accepted by today's society. For example, scheduling a Saturday evening mass by many parishes that previously only allowed Sunday services, better serves today's parishioners and shows needed flexibility.

Sunday Hunting Testimony Continued  
Randy Santucci

- The argument from non-hunters, is that they want Sunday to be able to enjoy the outdoors without fear of hunters. A fear of hunters or hunting is a baseless accusation! The inverse of that argument suggests that the other 6 days of the week that hunters grace the fields are a safety concern? The ludicrous basis of that entire argument is validated with examination of the exemplary safety record of Pennsylvania hunters, the facts and data speak for themselves.
- Actually, the non-hunting public should be grateful for secondary use access to the 1.5 million acres of game lands. If not for sportsman dollars, mostly generated thru hunting, it is certain most of these game lands would be developments or private properties not accessible to the general public thru the guidelines provided by the PGC.
- **The addition of another weekend day would be the biggest benefit to youth mentoring and opportunity than most any other attempt like thru special youth days.**
- High school football players that play Friday night are almost always required to be back at school Saturday to review films. Subsequently we lose that prime age group of young men from our hunting ranks during football season.

Summary;

I am sure there are many more reasons that would relate to any specific family circumstance. We permit most all-personal choices for Pennsylvanians pertaining to what their Sunday activities entail, it is time for this antiquated blue law to be removed. Any landowner for whatever their reason that still does not agree with Sunday hunting, can simply post their land NO SUNDAY HUNTING. Threats of taking their land from hunting availability by posting is a selfish position rather than just utilizing the No Sunday Hunting signage idea. Time constraints, common sense, and a changing society, has dictated evolutionary changes in legislation. Yet we continue to restrict hunting while permitting gambling, drinking and yes, I've heard the adult book stores are even open on Sundays!

Decades back, many religious denominations introduced Saturday evening mass to accommodate parishioners in their Sunday activities.

Personally I say a prayer almost every time I am able to sit in the wilderness, and enjoy nature that God has provided. We all have bricks and mortar churches, but some of my sincerest talks with the Lord come outside those walls while experiencing the natural serenity of outdoor hunting, I'm sure you have had that same experience. For the reasons explained above, now is the time for Pennsylvania to step into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and join 43 of our fellow states that benefit from partaking in unrestricted hunting on Sunday.

Thank You

Randy Santucci  
Board Chairman of Unified Sportsmen of Pennsylvania