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COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

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In re: House Bill 696

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Stenographic report of hearing taken  
in Room 8E, East Wing - Main Capitol  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Friday  
May 26, 1989  
10:00 a.m.

HON. THOMAS R. CALTAGIRONE, CHAIRMAN

MEMBERS OF JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

Hon. Kevin Blaum	Hon. Jeffrey E. Piccola
Hon. David J. Mayernik	Hon. Robert D. Reber, Jr.
Hon. Paul McHale	Hon. Karen A. Ritter
Hon. Christopher K. McNally	Hon. Chris R. Wogan

Also Present:

William Andring, Chief Counsel  
Katherine Manucci, Committee Secretary  
David Krantz, Executive Director  
Paul Dunkelberger, Research Analyst

Reported by:  
Dorothy M. Malone, RPR

ANN-MARIE P. SWEENEY  
536 Orrs Bridge Road  
Camp Hill, PA 17011

*149 pages  
7 minutes  
156 pages*

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1                   CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: We'll start the  
2 public hearing on the Pigeon Shoot Bill, House Bill 696.  
3 This is the House of Representatives Judiciary Committee.  
4 I am Chairman, Tom Caltagirone. I would like each of the  
5 panel members and staff to identify themselves for the  
6 record starting to my left.

7                   MS. MANUCCI: Kathy Manucci, Secretary  
8 to the Committee.

9                   REPRESENTATIVE RITTER. Karen Ritter, Repre-  
10 sentative from Allentwon.

11                  REPRESENTATIVE REBER. Robert Reber,  
12 Representative from Montgomery County.

13                  MR. ANDRING. Bill Andring, democratic  
14 counsel for the Committee.

15                  REPRESENTATIVE McNALLY: Chris McNally,  
16 Representative from Allegheny County.

17                  REPRESENTATIVE WOGAN. Chris Wogan,  
18 Representative Philadelphia.

19                  MR. DUNKELBERGER Paul Dunkelberger,  
20 Research Analyst.

21                  CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: I want to say  
22 thank you to everybody that is in attendance today.  
23 I know this is an extremely controversial issue. I  
24 would hope that everybody will maintain the proper decorum  
25 for this hearing so we can get to the facts and allow the

1 presenters to make their statements. And of course,  
2 the Committee members will have questions for those  
3 presenters. We would like to start out with Representative  
4 Robert Allen.

5 REPRESENTATIVE ALLEN: Thank you, Mr.  
6 Chairman. I have today three letters that I would like  
7 to read into the record at this hearing. The first is  
8 a letter from several members of the House of Representatives  
9 in the contiguous areas surrounding the Hegin's Pigeon Shoot.  
10 It is to the Honorable Thomas R. Caltagirone, Chairman  
11 of the House Judiciary Committee.

12 "Dear Mr. Chairman:

13 "This letter is in regard to House Bill 696  
14 (banning pigeon shoots in Pennsylvania). We  
15 would like to advise you that the members of the  
16 House of Representatives that have signed this  
17 letter strongly oppose the passage of this bill.

18 "It is our belief that the Hegin's Pigeon  
19 Shoot, in Schuylkill County, held on an annual  
20 basis on Labor Day is a local community function  
21 that raises needed charitable funds used for the  
22 maintenance of local recreational facilities.

23 "We feel that this is not a state issue  
24 but should be decided by individual communities  
25 on a local basis. Our constituents by a large

1 majority, favor this activity and we believe  
2 that the pa-sage of this bill would violate  
3 the rights of our local citizens' freedom of  
4 choice.

5 "Thank you very much for consideration  
6 in this matter.

7 "Signed - Bob Allen, 125th District, Fred  
8 C. Noye, 86th District, E. J. Lucyk, 123rd  
9 District, Ted Stuban, 109th District, Keith  
10 McCall, 122nd District, David Argall, 124th  
11 District, Merle Phillips, 108th District,  
12 Jeffrey Piccola, 104th District, Ronald  
13 Marsico, 105th District."

14 I would like to read a second letter into  
15 the record from the National Rifle Association of America,  
16 Alan S. Krug, NRA Field Representative.

17 "Dear Representative.

18 "It has come to my attention that claims  
19 have been made that the NRA in some way supports  
20 H.B. 696, proposed legislation that would ban  
21 live bird (pigeon) shooting in the Commonwealth.  
22 This is not the case -- the NRA has always been  
23 opposed to this legislation and remains opposed  
24 to it today.

25 "The NRA will continue to oppose this

1 legislation even if it is amended to limit the  
2 ban to the Hegins Pigeon Shoot or any other  
3 pigeon shoot.

4 "Live pigeon shooting is a traditional,  
5 international shooting sport. It has many  
6 adherents worldwide. Although the NRA has no  
7 programs of this type, it does not object to them.

8 "Passage of this legislation, however it  
9 might be amended to limit the various objections  
10 currently extant, would constitute a dangerous  
11 precedent that could lead to anti-hunting  
12 legislation in the future.

13 "NRA's position on the issue of live pigeon  
14 shooting remains the same as always. Should  
15 you have any questions or wish to discuss the  
16 matter with me in more detail, please do not  
17 hesitate to give me a call.

18 "Thank you."

19 The third letter, Mr. Chairman, is from  
20 Mr. Robert Tobash. He is a member of the Hegins Park  
21 Association Labor Day Committee and he is actually the  
22 chairman, working chairman, though he does not have a  
23 title.

24 "Honorable Thomas R. Caltagirone:

25 "Since 1934 the Labor Day Shoot has been

1 very special for many people of the Hegins area.  
2 This event has been beneficial in that it has  
3 provided a facility that is used by many  
4 organizations and families throughout this  
5 community. Other towns and cities spend tens  
6 of thousands of tax dollars to provide a recrea-  
7 tional facility such as the Hegins Park. Tax  
8 dollars do not support the Hegins Park.

9 "The main objective of the Labor Day event,  
10 I believe this to be true, was and is to provide  
11 an activity for sportsmen who by choice want to  
12 compete with other sportsmen. Since these  
13 sportsmen, who love this sport, have supported  
14 our Labor Day for the past 54 years we would  
15 like to and feel obligated to continue this  
16 shoot for them. In many cases, father and sons  
17 and brothers spend time together at something  
18 they like and want to do. This shoot has gone  
19 on without police protection and has not caused  
20 any trouble for our community or any other people  
21 for the first 50+ years. There has never been  
22 any injuries to anyone all these years. Only  
23 in the past three or four years some people from  
24 out of the area have succeeded in drawing national  
25 attention along with demanding police protection

1 costing taxpayers many tax dollars. These  
2 protestors came to Hegins trying to disrupt and  
3 criticize a local peaceful event. The sportsmen  
4 and local towns people stood by and watched  
5 and took their abuse. We were not breaking any  
6 law.

7 "Probably the most rewarding of all is that  
8 the people of this community have learned to  
9 work together donating much time for a common  
10 cause. Young men, and in the past few years  
11 some girls, get paid for setting the traps. This  
12 has taught these young people the reward for  
13 working and the value of money and that shooting  
14 is serious and dangerous. These young boys and  
15 girls, contrary to what the protestors want to  
16 have you believe grow up to be hard working,  
17 professional and business people. I would  
18 challenge anyone to go to the large employers  
19 outside this community and ask them how they  
20 like the employees from the Hegins Valley and  
21 how they compare them to other employees.

22 "The 200 volunteers who donate their time  
23 each year strongly disagree with the proposed  
24 H.B. 696 and its potential interference with  
25 their rights. Also the rights of sportsmen who



1                   enjoyed this sport for hundreds of years."

2                   Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

3                   CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: For the record,  
4 Representative Jeff Piccola has joined the panel. Questions  
5 from any of the members?

6                   REPRESENTATIVE PICCOLA. Mr. Chairman,  
7 no questions, but I would just like to echo for the  
8 benefit of the Committee the remarks of Representative  
9 Allen. I represent a district that adjoins the Hegin  
10 Valley, northern Dauphin County and many of my constituents  
11 participate in the activities on Labor Day, and I have  
12 personally visited the shoot on Labor Day, and I would  
13 concur with the statements that Mr. Allen has made.

14                  REPRESENTATIVE ALLEN: Mr. Chairman, I  
15 have one other thing. I have about 400 letters here  
16 for you. I will leave them with the staff. We have been  
17 getting them over the last few weeks I believe. Thank  
18 you very much.

19                  CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: Thank you, Bob.  
20 The next person will be Dr. George Cave.

21                  DR. CAVE. Mr. Chairman, Committee members,  
22 thank you for the opportunity to testify before you on  
23 House Bill 696 to ban live pigeon shoots in Pennsylvania.  
24 I would just like to begin by making a couple of comments  
25 in response to Representative Allen's remarks.

1 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: Excuse me, doctor.  
2 Let me just ask. Do you have a prepared text?

3 DR. CAVE: Yes, I do.

4 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: Go ahead.

5 DR CAVE: Just a couple of preliminary  
6 remarks. Representative Allen referred to this event in  
7 Heginns as a local issue and not a state issue. The Heginns  
8 Shoot is the only publicly held pigeon shoot in Pennsylvania,  
9 but that is not the only place pigeons are killed in  
10 Pennsylvania. They are also killed in gun clubs in  
11 other parts of the state. So, it isn't a local issue.  
12 It is a state issue.

13 Secondly, regarding the community support  
14 for this event, I want to point out that in a newspaper  
15 interview this past year in the Lebanon Daily News, the  
16 founder, that is to say the descendant of the founder,  
17 Herman Coleman, noted in a newspaper article in an  
18 interview that he could not give any justification for  
19 the shoot and that he had reached a point in his life  
20 where he didn't want to see anything die. So that is  
21 coming from the founder of this tradition.

22 My name is Dr. George Cave and I am  
23 President of Trans-Species Unlimited, a national animal  
24 protection organization based in Pennsylvania with 30,000  
25 supporters nationwide. Our organization initiated, and

1 for the last three years has headed the effort to ban live  
2 pigeon shoots in the State of Pennsylvania.

3 Today you will have the opportunity to hear  
4 from both sides of the controversy, and following the  
5 testimony to see for yourself, on film, the events that  
6 this hearing concerns. I respectfully urge you to remain  
7 or to return to see that film, as it records what actually  
8 happens at live pigeon shoots far more graphically and  
9 objectively than witnesses on either side could possibly  
10 do. You will be able to judge for yourself whether it is  
11 a sport or a bloodbath and whether events of this kind  
12 should continue in the State of Pennsylvania, or be banned  
13 as they are almost everywhere else in our country.

14 This issue stirs hot emotions on both sides.  
15 Those of us who believe that wanton, unnecessary cruelty  
16 is always wrong, no matter whether the animal is a popular  
17 or favored species, are outraged that this cruel spectacle  
18 could have continued without protest for more than 50 years  
19 in our state.

20 Those who believe that they have the right  
21 to do anything they want to animals--no matter how cruel--  
22 for amusement, profit, or simply to vent their aggressions,  
23 think that members of the humane community who are  
24 campaigning to end this cruelty have no right to interfere  
25 with their 54 year old so-called tradition. To maintain

1 this tradition, some pigeon shoot supporters are willing  
2 to intimidate, vandalize, and even threaten the lives of  
3 those working to stop the cruelty. I know this from  
4 firsthand experience because I have been threatened twice.  
5 I have received two death threats as a result of my  
6 participation in this effort.

7 But pigeon shoots are not simply a private  
8 matter of what people choose to do with their time. They  
9 affect the lives and well-being of living, feeling  
10 creatures who also have some basic rights to be spared  
11 unnecessary suffering and torment.

12 This is a concern which is well-recognized  
13 and respected within our cultural tradition. Deliberate,  
14 unnecessary cruelty is not acceptable behavior by the norms  
15 of our society. Yet the Hegin's slaughter, and others like  
16 it, have continued in violation of these standards of  
17 behavior. It is time to set things right and bring  
18 Pennsylvania into compliance with publicly-held values.

19 Our opponents can offer no persuasive  
20 argument at all for their position. As the testimony of  
21 the cruelty investigators here today will indicate, there  
22 is no question about the suffering that these events entail.  
23 I myself was also a witness to the killing in Hegin's on  
24 Labor Day, 1986. In the course of my work with a national  
25 animal protection organization, I am exposed to a constant

1 stream of depressing and horrifying information about how  
2 we humans inflict torment and misery on our fellow  
3 creatures for the most frivolous of reasons. Yet I can  
4 honestly say that the pigeon shoots at Hegin's rival the  
5 worst of the atrocities we must deal with on a daily  
6 basis.

7 In spite of the opposition of the NRA to  
8 this bill, the pigeon shoot issue is not a gun control  
9 issue. It does not ban the use of shotguns--merely their  
10 use for target practice with live animals. The fact is,  
11 the NRA routinely adopts a dogmatically antagonistic  
12 posture against any measure which would affect the use of  
13 guns in any way.

14 Likewise, the pigeon shoot issue is not a  
15 pigeon control or disease control issue. At Hegin's, 8000  
16 or more birds are killed in a single day. A large  
17 proportion of these birds are purpose-bred for the explicit  
18 purpose of being shot. Such events contribute nothing to  
19 control of pigeon populations in urban areas.

20 Nor are pigeon shoots a form of disease  
21 control. The absurdity of this claim which has occasionally  
22 been made is best indicated by what takes place every  
23 year at Hegin's. If the birds killed at Hegin's are disease  
24 carriers, why in the world would the community import  
25 8000 of them to a public event and even hire area youngsters

1 to retrieve dead and wounded birds thereby exposing their  
2 children directly to infection by disease?

3 Most importantly of all, pigeon shoots are  
4 not a hunting or sportsman's issue. There is nothing  
5 sporting whatsoever about releasing sluggish caged birds  
6 which have not been fed or watered for several days, and  
7 mowing them down with a shotgun at a distance of 30 yards,  
8 often while they are hopping about on the ground, unable  
9 or unwilling to fly. And you will see the photographic  
10 evidence that that takes place every year in Hegin.

11 Many hunters and other sportsmen recognize  
12 that pigeon shoots are not sport. In a survey of sportsmen  
13 circulated last year to you by your colleague, Representative  
14 Levdansky, almost half of the sportsmen surveyed said  
15 they were in support of the pigeon shoot bill.

16 Finally, pigeon shoots are not an economic  
17 issue. Like resourceful country and small town people  
18 everywhere, the people of Hegin are fully capable of  
19 putting together an annual community fund-raising event  
20 which will bring honor rather than shame to their  
21 community.

22 Our opponents, in short, can offer no  
23 justification at all for these events, except that they  
24 like to kill birds. But using living animals for target  
25 practice is no longer viewed by the majority of people in

1 our society as acceptable behavior.

2 Committee members: There is an overwhelming,  
3 clear public mandate in our state for the termination of  
4 these barbaric spectacles of cruelty. Representative  
5 Allen mentioned that he has 400 letters to present to  
6 you. If you contact the Governor's Office, you will find  
7 out there has been 50,000 letters received from all over  
8 the world to end these events. The issue has received  
9 unprecedented national media attention from coast to coast,  
10 earning our state the unflattering designation, "the  
11 shame of Pennsylvania." Governor Casey, as I mentioned,  
12 has acknowledged receiving over 50,000 letters of protest  
13 against the pigeon kills and virtually every newspaper in  
14 our state, as well as several major newspapers in other  
15 areas such as the Cleveland Plain Dealer have taken a  
16 strong editorial stand against these shoots and specifically  
17 urge you, as Pennsylvania legislators, to ban these  
18 events.

19 The humane and animal protection community  
20 nationwide, constituting an active political constituency  
21 of ten million people and 8000 organizations is unanimously  
22 allied behind our campaign to end these slaughters.  
23 Recently, Nevada, one of the few remaining states to  
24 legally permit pigeon shoots, passed a law banning them.  
25 And I might add, if you know anything about Nevada, it is

1 the last refuge of the wild and woolly west. I think if  
2 Nevada can do it, Pennsylvania can do it.

3 We also believe that there is a clear  
4 majority of Pennsylvania legislators in support of this  
5 bill. According to the written statements of Pennsylvania  
6 legislators who have committed themselves to a position  
7 on this issue, which we have on file, support for the bill  
8 outnumbers opposition to the bill by an almost three to  
9 one margin.

10 In contrast to this overwhelming show of  
11 support for this legislation, our opponents constitute  
12 a tiny, if vocal minority, entirely unrepresentative  
13 of popular public opinion. It is important to note that  
14 according to the U.S. Department of Commerce figures,  
15 the total number of hunters nationwide constitutes only  
16 seven percent of the national population. Calling your  
17 attention to Representative Levdansky's survey of sportsmen  
18 once again, which indicated that half of the hunters are  
19 willing to publicly take a stand against pigeon shoots,  
20 this indicates that by the most generous estimate, perhaps  
21 three percent of the general public would condone or  
22 approve of live pigeon shoots, while 97 percent would  
23 oppose them.

24 Yet up until now that vocal three percent  
25 has been permitted to block the public will and foil the



1 public mandate for an end to these slaughters.

2 Today, Committee members, we do not even  
3 ask for your vote in favor of the pigeon shoot bill. We  
4 ask for something far more modest: simply to give this  
5 bill a fair chance on the floor of the House and to report  
6 it out of the Judiciary Committee.

7 If the concerned public and humane  
8 community loses a fair fight on the floor of the House,  
9 then so be it. At least the bill will have been fairly  
10 considered and defeated through due democratic process.  
11 I respectfully urge you to report House Bill 696 out of  
12 your Committee onto the House floor for a vote. Thank  
13 you.

14 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE. Thank you, Doctor.  
15 Would you please remain for some questions? Representative  
16 Blaum and Mayernik have also joined the panel. Questions  
17 for the doctor?

18 BY REPRESENTATIVE PICCOLA:

19 Q Dr. Cave, what is your view on the  
20 rattlesnake roundups and the fish rodeos that the Fish  
21 Commission sponsors?

22 A I am not aware of the fish rodeos, as  
23 you call it.

24 Q Let me describe one for you. The Fish  
25 Commission breeds trout. They release the trout into a

1 very small limited stream and then about 5,000 little kids  
2 come around with fishing rods and in about ten minutes  
3 have caught all the fish in the stream.

4 A Well, fishing of course, does not involve  
5 anything like the suffering like live pigeon shoots  
6 involve. The problem with the main cruelty issue we see  
7 in witnessing the shoot firsthand is the fact that the  
8 majority of birds, and I believe this is true from seeing  
9 it firsthand, the majority of birds is not killed  
10 instantly and they lie out on the fields, wounded, flapping  
11 their wings and you will see this in the film. There is  
12 several minutes between shooting rounds before they are  
13 gathered up and then they are taken, their necks are  
14 broken, their heads are pulled off or they are stomped  
15 to death by the community's children.

16 So, I don't think there is any comparison  
17 between the two situations.

18 With regard to your other question about  
19 rattlesnake roundups, I know the Pennsylvania Fish  
20 Commission on that particular issue was very concerned  
21 about that and opposed that because of the danger of  
22 damaging the vertebrae of the snakes. So that is by  
23 no means unanimous approval of those kind of events by  
24 people involved in government wildlife management practices.

25 Q You didn't answer my question. Are you for

1 them or against them? I mean, my question I think is  
2 designed, you want to stop pigeon shoots today. What  
3 do you want to stop tomorrow?

4 A I don't see our position on that issue  
5 is relevant to pigeon shoots.

6 Q Well, you may not think it is, but I am  
7 asking a question. Are you choosing not to answer it?

8 A No, I'll answer it. We don't approve of  
9 fishing either, but that is very, very low on the scale  
10 of abuses. So, you know, it certainly doesn't have any  
11 priority.

12 Q You do not approve of fishing?

13 A No, we do not approve of fishing.

14 REPRESENTATIVE PICCOLA. Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: Chief Counsel to  
16 the Committee has a question.

17 BY MR. ANDRING:

18 Q Just a couple of quick ones. You refer  
19 to a three to one margin of legislators, Pennsylvania  
20 legislators, who would oppose the pigeon shoot. How  
21 many responses do you have to come up with that figure?

22 A I believe that I will have to look in our  
23 files. I believe this is accurate. If it isn't, I will  
24 provide you with the information. I believe that was  
25 based on approximately 80 of House Representatives.

1 Q Can you provide us that?

2 A It was approximately 60 to 20. That was  
3 written statements we have on file. The rest were un-  
4 committed and as far as we know have not made --

5 Q Could you also provide us with the, the  
6 Committee which will be distributed to members, the details  
7 on the survey you referred to from Representative Levdansky,  
8 the number of people involved in that survey, the results?

9 A Certainly.

10 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: Representative  
11 McNally.

12 BY REPRESENTATIVE McNALLY:

13 Q Dr. Cave, with respect to Mr. Piccola's  
14 questions, I take it that your concern is not directed  
15 towards the killing of animals so much as the way in  
16 which they are killed. Is that correct?

17 A We are concerned with both, but in this  
18 particular case and the thing that is most objectionable  
19 is the tremendous cruelty involved and the suffering  
20 involved.

21 Q And so I suppose on a whole range of  
22 animal welfare issues, for example, the training and use  
23 of pit bulls and other dogs for killing each other really  
24 as a contest or an amusement, that would be sort of along  
25 the same lines as this pigeon shoot.

1           A     I think that is a very good analogy to  
2 draw with dog fighting, yes.

3           Q     And so really the issue, at least as I  
4 see it, is not sports so much as killing for amusement.  
5 Isn't that right?

6           A     That is correct. This is why I say that  
7 this is not a sport, it is not a hunt. Responsible  
8 hunters, I don't make any pretense that we like hunting,  
9 but the point is responsible hunters who know how to kill  
10 an animal cleanly, know how to shoot and track down and  
11 kill the animal as quickly as possible, that is an  
12 entirely different matter. The animal at least has a  
13 chance to get away. There is some sport involved and  
14 there is some commitment to causing as little suffering  
15 as possible. This is simply target practice. This is  
16 like shooting fish in a barrel. There is nothing sporting  
17 at all about it.

18                     I think if you view the footage of what  
19 takes place at Hegins, I don't see how any sportsman,  
20 any hunter, who really, sincerely believes in the ethics  
21 that they say they subscribe to could possibly support  
22 an event of this kind. It just completely contradicts  
23 the values they claim to subscribe to.

24           Q     And with respect to, say, these fish round-  
25 ups, I take it that the fish the children catch would be

1 eaten, Is that correct?

2 A I would presume so, yes.

3 Q That is generally regarded as a rather  
4 legitimate function of sport for the purpose of harvesting  
5 food.

6 A I think we have to make a distinction in  
7 terms of killing wild animals in general ranging from  
8 survival killing as native American groups like Eskimos,  
9 who have no other possible food source, and it is really  
10 a survival issue, to the most grotesque kind of killing  
11 of wild animals such as in pigeon shooting. Where it is  
12 not used for food, it is not survival, it is not sport.  
13 There is no reason to kill these animals. It is just,  
14 if you can consider it amusement.

15 Q So you would agree that there is really  
16 no comparison between a pigeon shoot and a fish roundup  
17 or something of that sort?

18 A I think they are very different kinds of  
19 events.

20 REPRESENTATIVE McNALLY: Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: Representative Reber.

22 REPRESENTATIVE REBER: Thank you, Mr.

23 Chairman.

24 BY REPRESENTATIVE REBER:

25 Q Doctor, maybe you mentioned at the outset,

1 what is your doctoral degree in?

2 A My degree is in philosophy.

3 Q Trans-Species Unlimited, do they subscribe  
4 to the game laws of Pennsylvania as being, in your mind,  
5 humane, in essence the killing of deer, pheasant, what  
6 have you?

7 A I think the game laws offer some protection  
8 to animals that are hunted to prevent certain kinds of  
9 abuses, poaching, spotting deer, things of this sort.  
10 They do provide some protection. That is obviously a  
11 very complex issue that has to do with wildlife management  
12 policy. We have problems with wildlife management policy  
13 because they proliferate game animals at the expense of  
14 other animals and the habitat. We have problems with  
15 it from an environmental or ecological standpoint.

16 Q With that in mind, not to interrupt you  
17 but for sake I might forget my trend of thought, if in  
18 fact the pigeons that were being used for this pigeon  
19 shoot were pigeons taken from 15th and Market Street in  
20 Philadelphia, pigeons in areas where that wildlife  
21 management aspect is an issue and were the type of birds  
22 that were released for this, I think there might be some  
23 change, at least in my mind, of how you would have to view  
24 this in light of your most recent comments on wildlife  
25 management.

1           A     Well, pigeons are not really wildlife.  
2 Pigeons are tame. They are feral, which means they are  
3 sort of halfway between domestic and wild animals. This  
4 is really a cruelty issue in our view. Whether the  
5 pigeons are purpose-bred or whether they are gathered  
6 up from cities, the main issue is the fact that there is  
7 such unnecessary infliction of suffering for something  
8 that is not sport and does not provide food. There is  
9 no justification for it in our mind. I think the fact  
10 that the pigeons, many of them are purpose-bred makes it  
11 a bit more offensive. The fact that if they were gathered  
12 up really wouldn't make any difference to the fact, the  
13 cruelty issue.

14           Q     Do you think, let me back track. Do you  
15 have any objection if this concept was embodied in the  
16 game laws as opposed to Title 18 Crimes and Offenses of  
17 the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Crimes Code?

18           A     If the events are prohibited, clearly  
19 prohibited from taking place, then I don't see any problem  
20 as to where the law is codified.

21           Q     One last question. You acknowledged in  
22 your testimony that Governor Casey has received over  
23 50,000 letters. What has been the Governor's response  
24 on this particular issue?

25           A     The Governor's, the only statement they



1 have made to our organization is the Governor is in  
2 sympathy with your concerns. He has not, to the best of  
3 my knowledge, come out explicitly and endorsed the bill  
4 or called for passage.

5 Q He has not.

6 A As far as I know.

7 Q In the 50,000 letters that he received  
8 have you seen any of the responses to those letters or  
9 is what you are alluding to a response to what you are  
10 inquiring on the issue?

11 A We have seen copies, many copies of the  
12 responses.

13 Q They have tracked that particular statement  
14 that you have made as to what the Governor's position is,  
15 seems-to-be position.

16 A The responses are basically noncommittal  
17 in a polite and encouraging way. In other words, he  
18 indicates our concern or the writer's concern is of  
19 consequence to him and he cares about the issue, but he  
20 has stopped short of coming out and saying I fully support  
21 your position and I want to see this bill passed.

22 REPRESENTATIVE REBER: Thank you very much.  
23 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

24 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: For the record,  
25 Representative McHale, and I'm not sure we mentioned

1 Representative Wogan also.

2 REPRESENTATIVE WOGAN: You did, Mr.  
3 Chairman.

4 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: Thank you, Dr. Cave.  
5 At this time I would like to have Key Bubbenmoyer and  
6 Edward Blotzer join us at the table. Since we are  
7 presenting pro and con, we might as well have both of  
8 you come up and Key can go first and then Ed will follow.  
9 Just identify yourself and who you represent for the  
10 court reporter.

11 MR. BLOTZER: My name is Edward Blotzer,  
12 Jr. I am the Chief Humane Officer of the SPC on  
13 statewide police matters.

14 MR. BUBBENMOYER: My name is Key Bubbenmoyer.  
15 I reside in New Tripoli, Pennsylvania. I'm here to speak  
16 on behalf of the pigeon shooters today.

17 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: Key, would you like  
18 to start first?

19 MR. BUBBENMOYER: First of all, Mr.  
20 Chairman and members of the Committee, I would like to  
21 thank you for the opportunity to allow me to testify here  
22 today. I have to apologize. I don't have any written  
23 format or material to hand to you, but I will be happy  
24 to document any of my statements on a follow up or  
25 identify the sources which I quote.

1                   Let me just get my notes out here. First  
2 of all, a little background on myself. I have been a native  
3 Pennsylvanian since birth. I was born in Berks County  
4 At a later on age in life moved to Lehigh County. I have  
5 lived in Pennsylvania all my life. I was born and raised  
6 on a farm in a rural area and I live on a farm today.  
7 Although I am not employed in agriculture, I still enjoy  
8 the benefits that can be attributed to farming life.

9                   Today I am a financial consultant and I  
10 have my practice in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. I have been  
11 a member of numerous sportsmen's clubs, conservation  
12 organizations. I am a past chairman of Ducks Unlimited  
13 of Lehigh Valley. I have been actively involved in  
14 shooting competitively for approximately 15 years. I  
15 competed actively in international skeet competitions  
16 which are the game which we shoot in our olympic events,  
17 and most of all, I have shot pigeons for 15 years.

18                   As a background, pigeon shooting, as we  
19 have heard, is not only native to Pennsylvania. Pigeon  
20 shooting has a history that goes back approximately 150  
21 years. It started, as we roughly can figure, in England  
22 where they used to take the English bowler hat and place  
23 a bird under that and flip the hat over as a means of  
24 releasing the bird. Since that time it spread across  
25 Europe and into this country where it is now engaged in

1 four continents, 15 nations, and one of the 15 nations  
2 is the United States but where we have approximately 15  
3 states today that actively have pigeon shoots that I know  
4 of.

5 As a matter of interest, something I just  
6 learned last year, pigeon shooting was an olympic event  
7 practiced in the olympic games up until the mid-forties,  
8 at which time according to NBC news, who was covering the  
9 games in Seoul, Korea was discontinued because of trying,  
10 they went to clay targets to use a more predictable,  
11 easy target for the competitors. That came from our  
12 television.

13 It is not a game of shooting fish in a  
14 barrel. It is by shotgun standards. It is a competitive  
15 sport. It is easily identified when you look at the  
16 results and the scores that come from the game.

17 We make no bones about it, we do shoot  
18 birds. We heard testimony earlier from Dr. Cave that  
19 he witnessed cruelty in display. I don't see how anybody  
20 can go to one pigeon shoot and be an instant expert on it.  
21 Since it has been practiced in the State of Pennsylvania,  
22 we have about 11 to 12 different clubs that participate  
23 in the sport. There are many counties across the state  
24 both on the east and the west coast, geographic regions.

25 As we said, the common pigeon in this

1 country was developed from the European rock dove. It  
2 was brought to this country as a domesticated bird and  
3 was eventually released and that is why it is called a  
4 feral animal. It is not indigenous to this country.

5 As a quote from the Great Plains Agricultural Council  
6 University of Nebraska, the pigeon is probably the most  
7 important bird pest associated with human habitation.

8 As an entry to discussing this, I would  
9 like to read an introduction in a book entitled Pest Birds,  
10 written by Walter J. Weber, professional entomologist and  
11 environmental consultant.

12 "Pigeons, starlings and English sparrows,  
13 these three birds have the potential for transmission of  
14 disease to humans and domestic animals as evidenced by  
15 numerous laboratory tests and documented situations which  
16 have demonstrated that these three birds are capable of transmit-  
17 ting certain microbial and parasitic agents. This does  
18 not mean that all birds are bad birds. As a member of  
19 the Audubon Society, I recognize that the vast majority  
20 of the more than 8,000 species of birds are very beneficial  
21 and a great pleasure to observe. But unfortunately, the  
22 three pest birds are obnoxious. Because of the disease  
23 agents they carry, the health hazards they create, the  
24 pollution they produce and the staggering economic losses  
25 they can cause --" I lost my place. "because of the

1 staggering economic losses they can cause. "

2 In addition, Mr. Weber goes on to point out  
3 that, "Feral pigeons are not harmless birds. They have  
4 the potential for transmission of over 30 diseases to  
5 humans plus another ten to domestic animals."

6 The pigeons that we shoot are not purpose-  
7 bred. I have shot pigeons for 15 years and have been  
8 actively involved and I have never met a pigeon breeder  
9 or somebody that raises pigeons for shooting. All the  
10 birds are trapped. The birds are trapped in rural areas,  
11 on dairy farms where they can pose a definite threat to  
12 dairy farmers, horse farmers especially, and the majority  
13 of your birds are coming out of your cities. They are  
14 trapped in areas where they are posing not only a health  
15 threat, but economic concerns, primarily, grain yards,  
16 shipyards where grain is shipped in and out, food  
17 consumption places that turn agricultural products into  
18 use for human consumption. This is where the birds come  
19 from. If these birds were not shot, they would be poisoned,  
20 which is another standard practice which we employ in  
21 the state to maintain the pigeon population.

22 The birds, as I mentioned earlier, carry  
23 30 diseases. Six of those diseases, as documented, can  
24 cause death to human beings. We are not saying all pigeons  
25 are diseased but allowed to accumulate, we do know that

1 they will create not only economic damage but do pose a  
2 health threat.

3 At this time I would like to read to the  
4 Committee an introduction from a book written in 1905  
5 "If unaquainted with the rules governing pigeon shooting  
6 at the various clubs and reading several articles in the  
7 city papers on pigeon butchery, one would naturally think  
8 the sport has been abused and that real and absolute  
9 cruelty has been practiced. Such, however, is not the  
10 case and the one making these statements has never visited  
11 the clubs and knows nothing of the conditions and rules  
12 governing pigeon shooting. They may believe their  
13 statements to be true, but they have nevertheless made  
14 the grossest errors."

15 This is not a new issue that we are dealing  
16 with. This has been around since 1905 when this article  
17 was written.

18 We are not teaching children to be  
19 insensitive. There is no barbarism. We are not there --  
20 we are competing in a sport which has been around for 150  
21 years and practiced in four continents.

22 May I submit to the Committee we are here  
23 today talking about pigeons. If pigeon shooting is out-  
24 lawed, what will we be talking about next time? Will it  
25 be pheasants? Will it be deer? We have heard from the

1 opposition already they are opposed to any killing of any  
2 animals, be it fish, rattlesnakes, whatever.

3 Thank you. I would be happy to answer  
4 any questions.

5 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: Before we do that,  
6 I would like Ed to present his testimony and then the  
7 members can ask either of you any questions. Ed, if  
8 you want to go ahead with your presentation.

9 MR. BLOTZER: Thank you, Mr. Caltagirone  
10 for the opportunity to appear before your Committee again  
11 and see you again personally. I think my activities are  
12 legendary in Pennsylvania and throughout the United States  
13 as a matter of fact. I am going to read from the prepared  
14 testimony.

15 It says, to the Chairman, members of the  
16 Committee, thank you for the chance to testify on this  
17 bill. My name is Edward J. Blotzer, Jr. and I am Chief  
18 Humane Officer and President of Animal Care and Welfare,  
19 a society for the prevention of cruelty to animals, and a  
20 member of the Federated Humane Societies of Pennsylvania.  
21 I have served in that capacity as the Chief Humane Officer  
22 for 20 years, 27 years total in the humane movement.  
23 During that time, I have investigated about 3500 complaints  
24 yearly comes through my desk of alleged animal cruelty  
25 and have prosecuted 2500 cases in the courts of this



1 Commonwealth with about an 85-86 percent rate of success.  
2 This is the highest of any cruelty investigator in this  
3 state and perhaps even in the United States. Cruelty  
4 to animals is not a job for a timid person. I can tell you,  
5 ladies and gentlemen, that these people that would abuse  
6 animals, I would like for them sometime to get into my  
7 police car. Brother Mayernik there can tell you some of  
8 the areas in Pittsburgh, where it is a pretty high crime  
9 area, and I doubt that these macho people, who would go  
10 into these areas where I go, that would go and shoot a  
11 defenseless bird, I doubt that they would have the courage  
12 or the guts to go into a place where I do after these  
13 criminals. I have had several murderers, rapists, child  
14 abusers, other kind of people that I have investigated  
15 for cruelty to animals. It is not a job for the timid,  
16 believe me.

17 In that capacity, I have seen and investigated  
18 almost every kind of animal abuse that there was, from  
19 the live burning of a dog in Jeannette, Pennsylvania to  
20 the drowning and hanging of animals, starvation of animals  
21 to the point of where they don't have the strength and  
22 the muscles to pick themselves up and they die for these  
23 reasons and for the freezing, suffocation and other  
24 cruelties inflicted on them. I have a low tolerance for  
25 both child abuse and animal abuse, and I will tell you the

1 reason why, because they can't defend themselves. I think  
2 any red-blooded American has to feel the same way as I do.  
3 There is a definite relationship between animal abuse  
4 and child abuse and people abuse. I have a study of it.  
5 I will give it to anyone of you gentlemen who want to  
6 give me your name, Son of Sam, Boston Strangler and so  
7 forth. They all got their starts on animals.

8                   Before continuing just let me state,  
9 first of all, that pigeons may sometimes be a nuisance,  
10 and if they are a nuisance, there is a humane means of  
11 controlling the pigeons. It is called ornotrol. You  
12 don't have to box them in Pittsburgh, Philadelphia or  
13 anywhere else. It is the humane means of animal control.  
14 It inhibits birth is what it does. As far as the comment  
15 made about poisoning pigeons, you are not allowed to do  
16 that. Pennsylvania state law prohibits the poisoning  
17 of any animal, pigeons included, because the state law  
18 says any animal.

19                   And my political protege, I have had about  
20 35, 40 years in the political arena, a protege of former  
21 Mayor Lawrence, Governor Lawrence, and he signed that  
22 legislation that if you are going to kill pigeons, they  
23 have to be killed humanely. That is a state law already.  
24 There is no reason in God's world why these gentle birds  
25 must be treated so inhumanely in a civilized society in the

1 year 1989. There is absolutely no reason for it by people  
2 who call themselves sportsmen. Killing these animals for  
3 pleasure and fun. It is no sport in any sense to do this  
4 to these animals. As I told you before, it may not be my  
5 favorite animal, but there is no sense in this kind of  
6 silly stuff. Nor are pigeon shoots an answer to the  
7 animal control problem as others will testify here today.

8 I myself have viewed the Hegins Pigeon Shoot.  
9 I've seen it. They shoot at close range. The birds are  
10 waiting there to be shot are kept in cages on the killing  
11 fields in the hot sun all day long without any food or  
12 water, cruelty to animals. A young boy puts a pigeon in  
13 a box about 30 yards away. Another person controls the  
14 strings which open the box the pigeon is in upon orders  
15 from the gunmen. The gunmen tells him I am ready to shoot.  
16 He has his gun aimed at that there box. The pigeon walks  
17 out, is blowed away, and if he ain't blowed away he suffers.  
18 The kids go and break his neck. The pigeon stumbles out  
19 of the box and does not always take flight. And these  
20 marksmen, if that is what you want to call them, the  
21 only animals I've seen get out in the air, they were  
22 relatively safe because these guys weren't very good shots.  
23 Sometimes it simply walks out and is shot on the ground.  
24 Most of the birds never even have a chance to fly away.  
25 They are shot a few feet off the ground at most. The few

1 who do get in the air usually escape as the gunmen seldom  
2 are able to hit the targets in the air. Even before the  
3 pigeon is released from the box, the gunman is poised  
4 to shoot it as soon as it gets into his view. Some are  
5 killed immediately and others are wounded. I've seen  
6 them flopping around on the ground there with the bullet  
7 wounds in them. These wounded animals then are picked up  
8 after several minutes by young children 10 or 12 years old,  
9 it sure isn't teaching them respect for life, who pull  
10 their heads off or ring their necks or kill them in some  
11 other way and throw them in 55 gallon containers. Some birds  
12 which get injured fly away from the killing fields but  
13 they must suffer greatly an agonizing death with gunshot  
14 wounds. We found dead birds everywhere when leaving the  
15 fields. By the end of the day the fields are covered  
16 with the bloody feathers and body parts of thousands and  
17 thousands of birds. And they call this a sport? What  
18 kind of sport is that? These birds don't have a sporting  
19 chance. There is no sport about it.

20 When this type of cruelty is outlawed in  
21 our Commonwealth, we will not be a pioneer in legislating  
22 this inhumane activity out of existence. Indeed, we will  
23 just be catching up. There are 14 other states, including  
24 some of the states which are Alaska, Arizona, Connecticut,  
25 Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nebraska, New Jersey, Ohio,

1 Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia and Nevada.  
2 I have copies of all the states here that have these  
3 outlawed. In most other states these events are effectively  
4 banned under existing state anti-cruelty laws which are  
5 written in such a way as to include pigeons.

6 But in Pennsylvania pigeons aren't considered  
7 animals under the law. The game law doesn't protect them  
8 and the cruelty law doesn't protect them. If pigeons aren't  
9 animals, I'd like to know what they are. They certainly  
10 are not vegetables. They do bleed like other birds that  
11 are put down there in Hegin.

12 I am a cruelty investigator in Pennsylvania  
13 and I like to think I am a pretty good one. But the law  
14 in Pennsylvania tells me pigeons aren't animals so I can't  
15 do anything to stop this cruelty that goes on at pigeon  
16 shoots. Believe me, it is as bad as anything I've seen  
17 in all my years of experience and it makes me ashamed  
18 of being a member of the humane species, that we as human  
19 beings allow this kind of stuff to go on. It kind of  
20 makes me ashamed of our own species of animals.

21 It is the will of the people in Pennsylvania,  
22 our newspapers in Pittsburgh and that area, they have  
23 come out editorially against these obscene activities.  
24 People don't like this cruelty anymore than they like it  
25 when it happens to dogs and cats We are a nation of

1 animal lovers, and the humane movement is one of the  
2 fastest growing movements in the United States today,  
3 mostly because of public demand to protect all our living  
4 creatures. I am exceptionally proud to be a part of  
5 a movement to bring some humanity into being in our society.  
6 These people that you see over on this side here, these  
7 are the people today, good friends that are trying to  
8 bring some kindness into this world of brutality. Those  
9 are the kind of people you ought to respect, have a lot  
10 of respect for.

11                   Opposition to this bill comes from vested  
12 interests who are not concerned about the morality of  
13 this issue, and it certainly is immoral, who just want to  
14 go on doing what they've been doing for the past 54 years.  
15 It is a good thing people didn't think like that about  
16 slavery when it was years ago. I guess we would still  
17 have that. That was tradition in our country, too. I  
18 guess there is a lot of things that went on in our  
19 country that we ought to be glad to get rid of. Hurting  
20 harmless animals, it offends everyone who has a sense of  
21 decency and compassion.

22                   It is time to bring Pennsylvania into line  
23 with the overwhelming majority of states which do not  
24 permit these events to legally continue. Pennsylvania is  
25 only one of a half dozen states where these events are

1 allowed to continue. I am asking, as Mr. Cave did, let's  
2 be fair about this thing. Let's report it out of  
3 committee and let the House vote on it up or down, one way  
4 or the other. I think if this goes on, this shame goes  
5 on, I would feel sorry for the reputation of our  
6 Commonwealth, because on this particular issue we don't  
7 have a good reputation throughout the world. I thank you,  
8 Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity.

9 (Applause.)

10 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: At this time we  
11 will have questions from the panel. Representative Reber.

12 REPRESENTATIVE REBER: Thank you.

13 BY REPRESENTATIVE REBER: (To Mr. Blotzer)

14 Q Ed, I was kind of impressed with your  
15 description of how many actually get into flight and once  
16 they are into flight and how many are actually hit. Let  
17 me ask you this question. If the shooting was regulated  
18 in such a way that the bird had to be in actual flight  
19 at an actual height before discharge of the firearm  
20 could be carried out, would you see any --

21 A The answer to your question is no because  
22 it is not a necessary thing. It doesn't make sense at all.  
23 No sense at all. Why don't they get clay pigeons? There's  
24 where, if you are talking about marksmanship, Your Honor --

25 Q I am not a judge.

1 A I'm in court all the time.

2 Q So am I.

3 A You impress me anyhow. So I'll call you  
4 Your Honor. Anyhow, it is senseless. If you are going  
5 to be a marksman, why don't you use clay pigeons? If  
6 that's what they want to do is shoot, go ahead and do that.  
7 What do they want to do? They just want to see blood  
8 and guts and feathers in the air and dead. That is all  
9 they want to see. Use clay pigeons. It makes sense.  
10 That is sport.

11 (Applause.)

12 REPRESENTATIVE REBER. That is all the  
13 questions.

14 MR. BLOTZER: I left my resume with you.  
15 I think if you look at my resume in the field of politics,  
16 labor, news media, labor leader, engineer, member of  
17 Mensa, all these different things, I probably have as  
18 many credentials as any man who testified before your  
19 Committee in my background. Take a look at it and see  
20 for yourself. As a matter of fact, when I passed my  
21 engineer's examination on the railroad, I memorized the  
22 whole book word for word, page by page which is something  
23 very few people have ever done that I know of.

24 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: Representative  
25 McHale.



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REPRESENTATIVE McHALE: Thank you, Mr.

Chairman.

BY REPRESENTATIVE McHALE. (To Mr. Bubbenmoyer)

Q Is it Mr. Cahill, sir? I'm sorry, I didn't catch your last name. Is it Keith?

A The first name is Key, the last name is Bubbenmoyer.

Q How do you spell Bubbenmoyer?

A B-u-b-b-e-n-m-o-y-e-r.

Q Thank you, sir. I may be looking at the issue inaccurately, but you indicated in your testimony that if we ban pigeon shoots today, that the next time you appear here it might be an attempt to be on deer hunting or pheasant hunting. And I guess from my perspective, I see a clear distinction between deer hunting, pheasant hunting and the organized slaughter of pigeon shoots. I have been around weapons my entire adult life. I took my first NRA safety course 25 years ago. I am currently qualified as an expert with a rifle.

I support deer hunting. I support pheasant hunting. And if you were here today testifying on improved habitat for pheasants so that we might encourage that sport, I would be on your side. But when it comes to the organized slaughter involved in pigeon shoots, I fail to see the sportsmanship.

1                   Now you indicated that the birds that are  
2 used in organized pigeon shoots carry up to 30 diseases  
3 that are dangerous to human beings including six that are  
4 potentially fatal. And you indicated that there are ten  
5 additional diseases which can be spread from pigeons to  
6 other animals. Is that correct?

7                   A     To domestic livestock.

8                   Q     I see. What sanitary precautions do you  
9 take at the time of an organized pigeon shoot to control  
10 the danger of disease? If these birds are so dangerous,  
11 do the people who handle them wear rubber gloves? Do  
12 you separate the birds from the human beings who are  
13 present at these shoots? If they carry such dangerous  
14 diseases, compelling their destruction in the manner that  
15 you folks engage in, what kind of sanitary procedures do  
16 you adopt to prevent the spread of disease at the  
17 organized shoots?

18                  A     First of all, I didn't say that all birds  
19 have the disease. Obviously, the domestic pigeon has  
20 capabilities of transmitting up to 30 diseases and there  
21 has been reported incidents, as documented by the Atlanta  
22 Center for Disease Control, that this has happened. What  
23 we generally do at most pigeon shoots, we have boys  
24 wear gloves. Some of them will wear respirator masks.

25                  Q     Is that common that the people who attend

1 wear respirator masks?

2 A At some of the clubs they do that. You  
3 know, I can't tell the people in Hegin's Park how to dress  
4 or what to wear.

5 Q I think my question is a legitimate one.  
6 You emphasized the danger to human health and safety from  
7 these birds. My question has to do with protection you  
8 adopt to guarantee that these diseases, which you have  
9 cited, are not spread at these events. And I have seen  
10 photographs and I have seen videotapes of these events  
11 and I have seen no masks and I have seen no young boys  
12 wearing gloves. What I have seen is direct human contact with  
13 the very birds that you describe as being so dangerous.

14 A And what I am saying is you have seen  
15 photographs and tapes from one event one time.

16 Q And you are saying that these masks are  
17 commonly worn?

18 A At some of the clubs, yes.

19 Q Representative McNally raised a very good  
20 question. Specifically at your shoot are masks commonly  
21 worn? Are gloves normally worn by the people who are  
22 in contact with the birds?

23 A At my shoot?

24 Q Yes.

25 A I don't have a shoot per se but at two or

1 three of the private clubs or whatever that I belong to,  
2 yes, we have the boys wear gloves.

3 Q I don't mean boys. I mean people who are  
4 in attendance.

5 A Well, people who are in attendance aren't  
6 next to the pigeons.

7 Q At least from the pictures that I have seen --

8 A You have seen pictures from one event,  
9 one shoot. At many of the shoots, the pigeons, the  
10 live pigeons, aren't anywhere in sight.

11 Q How are they shot that they are not in  
12 sight?

13 A They are in what is described as a pit  
14 or basement underground and the traps are loaded from  
15 underground. They are not even up on the surface.

16 Q I don't want to belabor this. I have  
17 seen many photographs and many videotapes of pigeon shoots.  
18 I have yet to see a mask being worn by anybody. I  
19 have seen many young boys carrying dead pigeons. I have  
20 not seen any of them wearing gloves and I am not sure  
21 that the answers are as candid as they might be in  
22 response to my questions.

23 I think we have an inconsistency here in  
24 that the birds that are being described as extremely  
25 dangerous, but in contrast very few sanitary conditions

1 are observed at these events to prevent the spread of these  
2 alleged diseases. What do you do with the birds once  
3 they are killed?

4 A The birds are disposed of. Basically they  
5 are inedible because we wouldn't take a chance. They  
6 are used for fertilizer.

7 Q Well what is the process? Do people wear  
8 masks and gloves and go out and bury these things?

9 A They wind up at rendering facilities.

10 Q At what?

11 A At rendering facilities.

12 Q What are rendering facilities?

13 A Any part from meat processing, inedible  
14 animal parts go to make like fertilizers or protein or  
15 it is cooked down at a very high degree for several hours  
16 and that is what they do with everything. Your off-falls  
17 from beef or chicken slaughter or whatever, all goes to  
18 a rendering plant.

19 Q Maybe if we could bring this event down  
20 to perhaps more simple language. I have seen films that  
21 correspond to what has been described by the gentleman  
22 seated to your right. The birds have been blown out of  
23 the air and land on the deck. Young boys go out not wearing  
24 gloves, pick up the birds and retrieve them from the field.  
25 Now, is that an inaccurate description?

1           A     The birds come out of a box, they are shot.  
2 I wouldn't say they are blown away.

3           Q     But you haven't worked with the shotguns  
4 that I have worked with.

5           A     I think I have. It is illegal to shoot  
6 a pigeon on the ground. It just doesn't count for your  
7 scores if you shoot a bird on the ground. So the birds  
8 are in the air. They are shot. Yes, they are retrieved.  
9 Someplaces the boys have gloves and someplaces they don't  
10 have gloves.

11           REPRESENTATIVE MCHALE: I would suggest to you if  
12 arguments are valid that these birds are such severe  
13 threats as disease and microbotic carrying creatures,  
14 that perhaps some serious sanitary precautions be taken  
15 at these kinds of events should they be allowed to  
16 continue. Because I don't think we can say in one breath  
17 these are terrible creatures, disease carrying threats  
18 to human health and safety and even pulling up the  
19 potential of death and then in the next breath send ten  
20 year old boys out to ring their necks. And I just don't  
21 see that consistency.

22                 Now I don't want to monopolize my time here.  
23 I will close at this point. You quoted from an article  
24 as written in 1905. I would remind you that in 1905  
25 we were still hunting hawks here in Pennsylvania. The law

1 improves along with our changing what is viewed to be  
2 ethical as opposed to that which is now viewed to be  
3 unethical. Most of us have changed our views as a society  
4 since 1905 and I think perhaps the day has come to have  
5 such a change of viewpoint with regard to live pigeon  
6 shoots.

7 I will close with this statement. I meant  
8 very sincerely what I said earlier. If you were here  
9 today on behalf of genuine sportsmanship, pheasant  
10 hunting for instance, I would be the first one to support  
11 you, and that might offend some of the other folks here  
12 in the audience. If you were here today fighting for  
13 better habitat, a real problem in Pennsylvania for  
14 pheasants, I would be standing with you. But we are  
15 talking about releasing birds to a certain slaughter  
16 out of the box, I fail to see the sportsmanship in that.  
17 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

18 (Applause.)

19 BY REPRESENTATIVE McNALLY. (To Mr. Bubbenmoyer)

20 Q Mr. Bubbenmoyer, I have a couple of  
21 questions. Are you familiar with the pigeon shoot that  
22 takes place on Labor Day in Hegins, Pennsylvania?

23 A Yes.

24 Q Have you attended that particular pigeon  
25 shoot?

1           A     Not in the last five years, but prior to  
2 that, yes.

3           Q     And when you did attend, did the boys  
4 that handled pigeons at the Hegins Pigeon Shoot wear  
5 gloves and other sanitary, take other sanitary precautions?

6           A     Not that I know of.

7           Q     Why would clubs or the people in Hegins  
8 use pigeons? Apparently pigeons are the preferred  
9 target. Why not the other two, one of the other two  
10 species that you said were pests, starlings and sparrows?

11          A     I can't answer that. I mean, it has always  
12 been pigeon shooting as I know it.

13          Q     Well, if I could make an observation,  
14 I am not an ornithologist, but I am familiar with sparrows  
15 and starlings because they are very common birds. Pigeons  
16 are not very agile flyers from what I can tell,  
17 particularly compared to sparrows and starlings. It  
18 seems to me that perhaps pigeons are preferred targets  
19 because they are easier targets to hit. Would you agree  
20 with that?

21          A     Absolutely not. You know, if I can quote,  
22 we are making a lot of observations here today that clay  
23 target is a really tough sport and if you were a true  
24 marksman, you would shoot that. To make a statistical  
25 analysis for you at the biggest trap shoot in the United



1 States held last year, which is called The Grand American,  
2 held in Vandalia, Ohio, there was 2,883 participants.  
3 Of those 2,883 participants that participated in the  
4 one main event, which is you shoot 200 targets in segments  
5 of 25 targets each, out of the 200, 400 people scored or  
6 broke, as they say, 99 percent or better. Thirty of  
7 them of those 400 people had a score of 200 perfect.  
8 They went on to have a shoot off where the winner  
9 finally broke 624 out of 625. That is trap shooting.  
10 At the World Pigeon Shoot in 1987 held in Spain, the  
11 world championship, there was close to 1100 entrants  
12 shooting a contest of 25 birds. Out of 1100 people,  
13 the same people that traveled the trap shooting circuit  
14 and shoot at the different competitive shotgun games,  
15 out of 1100 people, one person scored 25 straight or  
16 a perfect score. It is the same shooters, the same  
17 type in comparison, the same people. There is no way that  
18 anybody that understands shotgun shooting or competes with  
19 a shotgun will say that pigeon shooting is an easy sport  
20 or a trap is much more difficult.

21 Q Are the rules of the world trap shooting  
22 championship the same as the trap pigeon shoots, not the  
23 trap shooting but the live pigeon shoot in Spain, the  
24 distance between the target and the marksman. Those are  
25 the same basic criteria in both contests?

1           A     Basically. They are run differently but  
2 the distance is the same.

3           Q     How do you mean they are run differently?

4           A     You shoot one bird at a time in Europe.  
5 Whereas, in this country, we might shoot three or four or  
6 five when you are on position to shoot.

7           Q     And is it true that you, in the Hegin Live  
8 Pigeon Shoot, 8,000 birds are shot in a single day? Is  
9 that accurate?

10          A     There will be a gentleman from Hegin  
11 testifying after me and I would think he could better  
12 answer that question.

13          Q     What about if the two or three clubs that  
14 you participate in live pigeon shoots, how many pigeons  
15 might you shoot in a single day?

16          A     A thousand, 1500.

17          Q     How many get away?

18          A     Say about ten percent, 15 percent, somewhere  
19 around there.

20          Q     So it sounds as if a large percentage of  
21 the marksmen that participate in your club shoot are  
22 shooting at a rate of 90 percent or better?

23          A     I'd say so, yes.

24                    REPRESENTATIVE McNALLY. It sounds as though  
25 you might have better pigeon shooters in your clubs than

1 in the world championship in Spain. I suppose that, you  
2 know, I can't agree with your main theme in your testimony  
3 that this has something to do with animal control or  
4 disease control. It strikes me that this is killing for  
5 amusement. I doubt very much that if your club substituted  
6 clay targets for live pigeons that somehow the amusement  
7 would be gone. I think that the attraction for shooting  
8 live pigeons is that they are live animals and that they  
9 are somehow an attraction of killing a live animal.  
10 Nothing about the setting of the pigeon shoots or the  
11 disposition of the pigeons after they are shot or the  
12 way in which they are collected indicates that there is  
13 any other purpose than just that particular idea of killing  
14 for amusement. Thank you.

15 (Applause.)

16 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: Thank you. Do you  
17 have a question, Jeff?

18 BY REPRESENTATIVE PICCOLA: (To Mr. Bubbenmoyer)

19 Q Mr. Bubbenmoyer, your testimony was somewhat  
20 at variance with Dr. Cave's and some other information that  
21 I received, that the pigeons that are shot you indicated  
22 are not bred for that purpose. That they are all trapped  
23 as far as you are aware of?

24 A That is correct.

25 Q And you have no information anywhere that

1 would indicate that they are bred for the purpose of  
2 being used in the pigeon shoot?

3 A That is a blatant lie. There is no such  
4 thing as a purpose-bred pigeon for pigeon shooting.

5 Q That conforms with everything that I have  
6 heard up until Dr. Cave's remarks this morning. Are you  
7 at all familiar with the breeding of pigeons for any  
8 purpose?

9 A I have friends in what they call racing  
10 pigeons. I have lived on a farm all my life so I have  
11 been around them. I don't know how extensive.

12 Q But you are not aware of any of them that  
13 have bred pigeons for shoots?

14 A I know where all the shoots are. I have  
15 been to all the shoots. I know all the bird suppliers  
16 and none of them raise pigeons.

17 REPRESENTATIVE PICCOLA: Thank you.

18 BY REPRESENTATIVE WOGAN: (To Mr. Bubbenmoyer)

19 Q Mr. Bubbenmoyer, you mentioned that pigeons  
20 are not indigenous to North America. Do you know if  
21 pigeons have any natural predators in the wilds in North  
22 America or in urban areas?

23 A The only thing that I know that would be  
24 like hawks and owls.

25 REPRESENTATIVE WOGAN: Mr. Blotzer, you are

1 shaking your head. Is that so?

2 MR. BLOTZER. That is true.

3 REPRESENTATIVE WOGAN: Hawks and owls?

4 MR. BLOTZER: Yes.

5 REPRESENTATIVE WOGAN: Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: Thank you, gentlemen.

7 At this time I would like to call Herman Clemens and  
8 Ms. Dana Stuchell. For the record, if you would indicate  
9 who you are and who you represent.

10 MR. CLEMENS: Mr. Chairman, I am Herman  
11 Clemens of Pine Grove, Pennsylvania. With your permission,  
12 sir, I would like to give a copy of my prepared statement  
13 to the panel.

14 MS. STUCHELL: My name is Dana Stuchell.  
15 I am testifying in place of Barbara Parnell, who could  
16 not be here today. I will be reading her testimony for  
17 her.

18 MR. CLEMENS. Mr. Chairman, members of  
19 the Judiciary Committee, I thank you for the opportunity  
20 to speak on the issue of HB 696 or more specifically  
21 Pigeon Shooting.

22 I am Herman W. Clemens from Pine Grove,  
23 Pennsylvania. However, I was born within eight miles of  
24 the site of the Hegins Labor Day Shoot. I am here as a  
25 citizen, sportsman and legislative chairman of the

1 Tulpehocken Rifle and Pistol Club of Pine Grove,  
2 Pennsylvania with an active membership of 250.

3           Since my earliest days of memory, I looked  
4 forward with eager anticipation to the Coleman Memorial  
5 Shoot. It was, and is, a time when friends and relatives  
6 would come home, gather for fun; food and fellowship at  
7 the shoot. For 54 years this worthwhile event has taken  
8 place without incident, providing an opportunity for  
9 friends and family to reunite, enjoy the shoot and support  
10 the Hegins Park Association.

11           Profits derived from the shoot are used for  
12 the installation and maintenance of recreational facilities  
13 for the youth and citizens of the community.

14           This shoot, since its beginnings, has been  
15 hosted and supported by various churches, sunday schools,  
16 fraternal organizations and other groups concerned with  
17 the welfare of the community. It attracts participants  
18 from all walks of life within and without the borders of  
19 the United States. Fred Coleman himself was a world  
20 renowned trap shooter, who demonstrated his talent for  
21 heads of state. A complete account of the life of Fred  
22 Coleman and the history of the shoot is available through  
23 the Hegins Park Association.

24           Why then, should such a beneficial activity,  
25 with such a historic background be under attack by those

1 outside the community with no real understanding of the  
2 local heritage and tradition? It is my opinion that the  
3 proponents of HB 696 have no regard for individual rights  
4 or the rights of the local community to govern itself  
5 without outside interference. Indeed, it is my belief  
6 that this historic shoot is but a test, a building block  
7 for these professional protestors who have greater  
8 objectives. If they succeed in stopping this shoot, the  
9 stage will be set to use this example as a precedent to  
10 stop similar shoots and events throughout the state, and  
11 wherever they are held in this country and abroad. Next  
12 will come regulated shooting preserves, game farms and  
13 ultimately the very sport of hunting itself.

14 Many of those who champion this bill have  
15 protested within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and in  
16 other states against hunting, trapping and businesses that  
17 deal in animal products such as furs. In fact, some of  
18 those who claim theirs is a high moral cause, engaged in  
19 stealing park property, vandalizing some of the recreational  
20 equipment and then brag about their misdeeds to the news  
21 media.

22 And I have with me a copy of a news article  
23 in which that occurs. Animal Rights Group claims it took  
24 traps. And it is available to any of you gentlemen. It  
25 has been taken out of a syndicated paper.

1                   What irony then, that we should find  
2 ourselves defending this legitimate and very worthwhile  
3 event, while those who protest and break the law are free  
4 to go from community to community, and cause to cause,  
5 attempting to inflict their will on others.

6                   Attempts to cause an incident have failed,  
7 so proponents of HB 696 have turned to the legislative  
8 process to impose the wishes of a few on the public. The  
9 good people of Hegin and surrounding areas have been  
10 injured by the actions of these protestors, and the Park  
11 Association has suffered the loss of revenue through their  
12 acts of intimidation. The tolerance, restraint and general  
13 attitude toward these protestors has been exemplary.

14                  I would like to read a quote that is not  
15 in my prepared statement. But earlier Dr. Cave alluded  
16 to the fact that we are the type of folks that could be  
17 involved in brutality and so forth and that there is a  
18 potential for some human harm here. I am reading from  
19 the Sunday Grit, which you well know is a Williamsport  
20 paper. This is a letter to the editor. I'm sorry, not  
21 a letter to the editor -- yes, it is. It is opinion,  
22 and it was submitted by Dr. George B. Cave, President of  
23 Trans-Species, Unlimited. And it will be available to  
24 you folks. It is documented June 21, 1987. I won't bore  
25 you with the entire letter. The important part of it is,



1 the title is Help Avert Disaster. We get down to a  
2 paragraph it reads as follows, and they were attempting  
3 at that time to have the Legislature stop the pigeon  
4 shoots. It says, "If the Legislature fails to act on  
5 this bill within the next few weeks," and the bill was  
6 HB 455, "it is safe to say that the bloodbath held in  
7 Heginns will be repeated for the 54th time." That is  
8 reference I'm sure to the pigeon shoot and there is a  
9 hyphen and then it says, "and this time around it may  
10 include harm to humans as well if another explosive  
11 confrontation occurs in Heginns."

12 Ladies and gentlemen, I respectfully submit  
13 to you that there has never been a confrontation on the  
14 part of the people at the shoot and there will be none  
15 unless it is provoked by those who come there to cause  
16 an incident.

17 The people of the Heginns Valley are known  
18 for their hospitality, honesty and work ethic, which you  
19 heard testimony to earlier. They are people who respect  
20 the rights of others and ask only for treatment in kind.

21 And if you will indulge me, I would like  
22 to read one more letter. This letter came from one of  
23 the folks who protested who was bused in from the State  
24 of Connecticut, not even a resident of Pennsylvania.  
25 This person had some second thoughts when they went home

1 after they had protested at the shoot. The letter begins,  
2 "A letter to the people of Hegins. It is the way of life  
3 that you have always known here among the beautiful  
4 mountains and valleys of Pennsylvania. It is the teaching  
5 of your forefathers, a teaching you first heard when you  
6 were very young. As young and away as the very young  
7 birds who were stopped in their flight or kept from  
8 flight by gunshot on Labor Day. But animals feel pain.  
9 Birds feel pain. Every living creature with a nervous  
10 system feels pain.

11 Enclosed is a small donation. May it be  
12 used for the maintenance of your park and serve at least  
13 as a little apology for whatever unkindness we showed you  
14 on Labor Day."

15 The lady signed the letter and it is  
16 available. I don't have her permission to use this, but  
17 I am sure it is public knowledge. It was printed in the  
18 newspaper and it is available to you as well.

19 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: Will you please  
20 submit those letters to the court reporter?

21 MR. CLEMENS. Yes. I will do that.

22 If I would continue, sir.

23 There is virtually no crime in this rural  
24 farming community, which refutes the protestors' charges  
25 that pigeon shooting fosters violence. There are more

1 noble causes for them to pursue, have they been active  
2 against murder, rape, drugs, or in changing the plight  
3 of the homeless and starving?

4 The killing of pigeons is really a non-  
5 issue. It is a well known fact that in addition to the  
6 diseases carried by the common pigeons, large sums of  
7 money are spent by federal, state and local governments  
8 to poison or otherwise rid their buildings of this damaging  
9 pest. Pigeon shooting was also an olympic event.

10 We have seen many of our rights and traditions  
11 lost or taken away over the years without just cause.  
12 This Committee has a golden opportunity to send the message  
13 that local rights, individual freedom and the guarantees  
14 provided for in our constitution are still in good hands  
15 in Pennsylvania.

16 I resent the implication by other testimony  
17 that I am included in animal abusers, dog burners and  
18 rapists by the way.

19 On behalf of all who support the Coleman  
20 Shoot and those who believe in local rule, I respectfully  
21 appeal to you to insure that bills such as HB 696 are  
22 aborted before they cause further damage.

23 Again, I thank you for the opportunity to  
24 present our views. I am at your service to answer any  
25 questions you may have. Thank you.

1 MS. STUCHELL: Before I read Mrs. Parnell's  
2 testimony, I must make a comment on the letter to the  
3 editor that this gentleman just read from. The way he  
4 read it, he insinuated that Dr. Cave was talking about  
5 violence to the people who were shooting the birds. That  
6 is certainly not the case. What he was talking about was  
7 violence to the people opposing the shoot. This is  
8 something that has cropped up again and again ever since  
9 we first learned about the event at Hegin and tried to  
10 stop it.

11 Many of our people have been threatened  
12 with violence and harassment in various ways, and I will  
13 not go into the details because I don't think it is  
14 appropriate here. But there were some very serious  
15 threats made to several of the people who went to the shoot.  
16 During the shoot, when we protested at Hegin, people  
17 exercised great restraint under very tense circumstances  
18 when so-called sportsmen were walking around with beer  
19 in one hand and a gun in another actively harassing  
20 protestors. We are a completely non-violent organization.  
21 That is what animal protection means. It means we are  
22 against violence, not just to non-humans but to humans  
23 also. Well, I really resent the insinuations made by  
24 this gentleman that we would ever lift a finger against  
25 any human no matter what they were doing to animals.

1 I would like to start with Mrs. Parnell's  
2 testimony.

3 "Mr. Chairman, Committee members, my name  
4 is Barbara Parnell. I appreciate the opportunity  
5 to testify before you today in favor of House  
6 Bill 696 to ban live pigeon shoots in Pennsylvania.

7 "I am a licensed cruelty investigator in  
8 Schuylkill County and an employee of the Hillside  
9 SPCA which serves the Hegins, Pennsylvania area.  
10 I have personally been a witness to the annual  
11 Labor Day pigeon shoot in Hegins.

12 "I speak on behalf of the many area residents  
13 of Schuylkill County who oppose this event and  
14 others like it, but who in many cases are  
15 reluctant to speak out or come forward to oppose  
16 these events for fear of conflicts with their  
17 neighbors and the problems which public  
18 opposition to this event, which has been going on  
19 for 54 years, entails. Many of us who have spoken  
20 out have been harassed, threatened, and sometimes  
21 made to feel disloyal to our community.

22 "But loyalty to traditions which perpetuate  
23 cruelty is no virtue, and there is no question  
24 that shoots like the one held in Hegins each year  
25 are unspeakably cruel. As a licensed cruelty

1 investigator with experience in investigating  
2 cruelty cases with dogs, cats, and other animals,  
3 I can only echo the previous testimony of Mr.  
4 Blotzer in saying that these events are among  
5 the cruelest that I have ever witnessed. As a  
6 cruelty investigator, one has to harden oneself  
7 against what one sees or else it would be  
8 impossible to do the job, but I can tell you in  
9 all honesty that what I saw take place in Hegins  
10 was among the hardest spectacles of cruelty  
11 and brutality I have ever had to witness. To  
12 realize that our Pennsylvania anti-cruelty laws  
13 are written in such a way as to not include these  
14 poor birds under their protection makes them  
15 seem a mockery. To stand helplessly on the  
16 sidelines and watch animals being systematically  
17 shot and wounded by the thousands, with barely  
18 a prayer of escaping from the shooters' guns,  
19 made me feel ashamed to be a resident of Schuylkill  
20 County and made me ashamed, as a human being, of  
21 what we humans are capable of in the name of  
22 'sport.' To watch the birds lying on the ground,  
23 their wings flapping in agony, only to die by  
24 having their heads pulled off or being stomped  
25 to death is enough to sicken and disgust any

1 normal human being.

2 "Other witnesses have addressed the supposed  
3 issues of gun control and pigeon control, so I  
4 will pass over that, as the arguments given for  
5 continuing the shoots on this basis are completely  
6 hollow and false.

7 "But I would like to bring up two other  
8 issues which are very important: the supposed  
9 economic benefits of the shoot to the community  
10 of Hegin, and the effect an event of this kind  
11 has on the developing attitudes of the children  
12 in the community.

13 "The Hegin Shoot has been defended as a  
14 fund-raiser for the local park. In the first  
15 place, the park in Hegin is not a public  
16 facility, but is privately owned, contrary to  
17 what is generally believed.

18 "But more importantly, the claim that the  
19 shoot itself raises funds to maintain the park  
20 is simply false. In fact, it is the concessions  
21 which raise the funds. When the cost of  
22 purchasing the birds and setting up the equipment  
23 for the shoot is taken into account plus paying  
24 the young boys to finish off the birds, the  
25 shooter fees do no more than cover the costs at

1 most.

2 "But it is obvious that communities  
3 throughout this Commonwealth and throughout  
4 this country are able to organize community fund-  
5 raising events with concession sales which help  
6 maintain public facilities without killing 8000  
7 animals in the process. It is not difficult to  
8 think of many alternative events which could be  
9 just as financially profitable for the community.  
10 Fairs, arts and crafts festivals, carnivals,  
11 and athletic tournaments are just a few of the  
12 many possibilities.

13 "As a cruelty investigator, I am also very  
14 concerned, not only about the suffering of the  
15 animals in events of this kind, but also about  
16 the impact this has on the community's children.  
17 Numerous studies have documented a history of  
18 cruelty and animal abuse during the childhoods  
19 of convicted violent criminals.

20 "What message does it give our children to  
21 encourage them to attend an event promoted as  
22 family fun and entertainment whose featured form  
23 of entertainment is the completely unnecessary  
24 and cruel slaughter of thousands of animals  
25 from dawn till dusk? And what message does it



1 give our children to actually hire them to pick  
2 up wounded birds and pull their heads off or  
3 break their necks? By the time dark falls on  
4 the Hegin's shoot, these children have had the  
5 brutalizing experience of having personally killed  
6 literally hundreds of animals in the most savage  
7 ways imaginable.

8 "When I have recounted what goes on at Hegin's  
9 to friends and other cruelty investigators in  
10 the humane movement, their reaction is one of  
11 near-disbelief and horror. I feel that it makes  
12 my work in trying to halt cruelty to dogs and  
13 cats a *mockery*, when at the same time, this  
14 cruelty to birds goes on year after year and the  
15 Legislature fails to act to stop it, in spite  
16 of the hue and cry which has gone up all over  
17 the country to stop it.

18 Committee members, Mr. Chairman, this is a  
19 tradition which has gone on far too long. I  
20 am proud of being a Pennsylvanian and a resident  
21 of Schuylkill County but I am ashamed of what  
22 goes on in my county year after year while this  
23 piece of legislation remains stuck in your  
24 Committee. Please take action now to put an end  
25 to these barbaric killings which have become

1 known throughout the country as the "Shame of  
2 Pennsylvania."

3 "Because of these events, Pennsylvania  
4 risks gaining the reputation in the U.S. which  
5 Spain now has among the nations of Europe as  
6 a result of the continuation of their bloody  
7 bullfights. It risks being considered as a  
8 state where there is no respect for compassion  
9 and humane treatment of animals, where a  
10 'tradition' which offends and outrages the values  
11 of other Americans everywhere is allowed to  
12 continue because legislators fail to act.

13 "We in the humane community and the general  
14 public at large want this shame to end. Please  
15 give this bill a fair chance by reporting it out  
16 of your Committee onto the House floor for a  
17 vote. Thank you."

18 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: Thank you. Members,  
19 Jeff.

20 REPRESENTATIVE PICCOLA: Mr. Chairman,  
21 thank you. Thank you, Mr. Clemens. I am glad you raised  
22 the point that you did in your testimony because I wasn't  
23 going to say anything. I was going to let Mr. Blotzer's  
24 comments pass, and I see Ms. Parnell raised the same issue,  
25 but I would like to come to the defense of the constituents

1 of Representative Allen and my constituents who live in  
2 the same neighboring type of community. The implication  
3 that because they permit such an activity in their  
4 community, that they are somehow more prone or are child  
5 abusers or are more prone to criminal activities is  
6 absolutely absurd.

7 Ma'am, I can tell you that if we had the  
8 same kind of people that you have in the Hegin Valley  
9 and Powell Valley and northern Dauphin County throughout  
10 the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in some of our larger  
11 cities, we wouldn't have a lot of the problems we have in  
12 this state. And I can tell you that for a fact.

13 So we can disagree on this issue maybe  
14 whether this activity should go on or shouldn't go on,  
15 but let us not besmirch the reputations of the people that  
16 live in these small rural communities. Thank you.

17 (Applause.)

18 MS. STUCHELL. Can I respond to that?

19 I don't think Mrs. Parnell, as I read her testimony and  
20 I remember it, said anything bad about any of the residents  
21 of Hegin. In fact, she said she was proud to be part of  
22 that community. But it was this one event that she was  
23 very much ashamed of. And she mentioned objective studies  
24 linking cruelty to animals with cruelty to humans.

25 REPRESENTATIVE PICCOLA: I don't deny that

1 those studies exist and I can probably find studies to  
2 prove most anything we want to prove. I know the people  
3 of the Hegin Valley. I know the people of northern  
4 Dauphin County that live just adjacent to the Hegin Valley.  
5 They are not criminals. They are not child abusers, and  
6 they permit this activity to take place. Now whether we  
7 are going to ban this activity on a statewide level, that  
8 is another issue. But to suggest or even imply that  
9 because they permit this to go on in their communities  
10 that they are child abusers or criminals, I don't think it  
11 belongs in this debate and I am sticking up for my  
12 constituents on this issue right now. I am glad Mr.  
13 Clemens raised it. He lives in that community also and  
14 is a native of that area.

15 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: Representative Blaum.

16 REPRESENTATIVE BLAUM: Thank you, Mr.

17 Chairman.

18 BY REPRESENTATIVE BLAUM. (To Mr. Clemens)

19 Q Mr. Clemens, I sympathize with the social  
20 aspect of the shoot and can imagine that it is a center  
21 of great activity and camaraderie during Labor Day weekend  
22 with everybody coming home and so on. If this legislation  
23 passed and clay pigeons were substituted, couldn't that  
24 still go on? Couldn't that still be a very special  
25 weekend in your community?

1           A     No, sir, I don't think so for the following  
2 reasons. There are already competitive clay shoots.  
3 It was not my purpose to come here and argue one shoot  
4 over the other, however, since you asked. Testimony has  
5 been given and we know, it is documented, that pigeons  
6 are harder to hit. And the issue here is really one  
7 of custom and tradition. Unfortunately, in this country,  
8 and we talked a while ago about ethics and values, there  
9 doesn't seem to be much regard for customs and traditions.  
10 The pigeon shoot has been an honorable event for all these  
11 years. People simply will go somewhere else where there  
12 are a lot of other clay shoots being held. There is no  
13 special attraction to watching a clay target come out  
14 of a given area, go into a given zone of fire and be broken.  
15 Pigeons are unpredictable.

16                     And to refute some of the earlier testimony,  
17 we have had some statements made that they are put in  
18 close proximity to shotgun, blown away and what have you.  
19 I will agree with those folks, they are put not into 30  
20 feet, if they want to have their facts straight, it is  
21 like 30, 31 and 32 yards. The reason for that, if they  
22 understand shotgunning, is the patterning and effective  
23 range of the gun. If they want to put them beyond that  
24 range, then they would be a party to injuring the birds.  
25 There would not be a clean kill. None of those people that

1 don't shoot the birds go there to harm, mame and cause  
2 suffering. It is a part of the rules of the match. And  
3 the inference that we see people with beer is just another  
4 smokescreen. I can take a picture of anyone of us in  
5 this room at a given place, under a particular circumstance,  
6 and use it to my advantage. Responsible shooters and those  
7 that I see participate do not carry beer with them to the  
8 line. Indeed, most of that is prohibited in the rules.  
9 However, after the shoot is over, someone may have a very  
10 expensive shotgun in their possession that they want to  
11 control for security reasons and safety and they may have  
12 stopped for a hamburger, a beer or whatever and that  
13 certainly can be used. Thank you.

14 BY REPRESENTATIVE BLAUM: (To Ms. Stuchell)

15 Q Mr. Blotzer a few minutes ago said that I  
16 would be interested and the Committee would be interested  
17 in why Mrs. Parnell is not here. Do you know why she is  
18 not here and would we be interested in why she is not here?

19 A Yes, I do know why she is not here. I  
20 was asked not to explain that reason. May I just ask  
21 the Chairman, his advice on this matter? Should I mention  
22 the reason or not? I believe that Ms. Parnell has said,  
23 we have her permission to mention the reason. Is that  
24 correct? Yes. She said we have her permission to mention  
25 the reason.

1 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE: It is your choice.

2 MS. STUCHELL: Well, since she has said,  
3 I will mention the reason. Yesterday she received a  
4 phone call from someone threatening to rape her 12 year old  
5 daughter while she was waiting for the school bus, to  
6 cause a car accident to her son on his way to work I  
7 believe it was, possibly to cause damage to the place of  
8 business of her husband and various other things of that  
9 nature. She was very upset by this, of course, as we  
10 can all imagine. Threats on our family are very, very  
11 serious and quite upsetting. She was especially upset  
12 because this person seemed to be very familiar with the  
13 details of her personal life, her comings and goings.  
14 And they said, wouldn't it be a shame if this happened  
15 to your son on his way to where he was going and they  
16 seemed to have scoped out her lifestyle and were very  
17 familiar with the comings and goings of her family.

18 BY REPRESENTATIVE BLAUM: (To Ms. Stuchell)

19 Q Can I ask, Mr. Chairman, was that in  
20 relation to her coming today?

21 A Exactly, yes. It was a threat. If you  
22 appear today at the hearing to testify, then these things  
23 might happen.

24 Q Were they by phone?

25 A Yes, it was a phone call. As I mentioned

1 before, that is not the only incident. That is not to  
2 say that all people of Hegin's are like that.

3 Q We don't even know if the call came from  
4 that community. I mean, I don't want --

5 A Right. I believe the other threats,  
6 we have reason to believe came from the community. However,  
7 we are not saying that the people in the community are  
8 bad people and nasty people. Certainly we cannot make  
9 sweeping generalizations and the dealings we have had with  
10 them have been generally good as far as our organization's  
11 actual dealings with the people, but we have had incidents  
12 of this type come forth.

13 BY REPRESENTATIVE McNALLY: (To Mr. Clemens)

14 Q Mr. Clemens, I would like to discuss your  
15 argument that we ought to oppose this particular piece of  
16 legislation in order to promote local freedom, local  
17 choices, allow communities to do what they want to do.  
18 Let's follow that logic to its natural conclusion.  
19 Suppose we had a community with a tradition of, for  
20 example, cock fights which has been a longstanding  
21 sport, some call it, and which birds I think have razor  
22 blades attached to their legs. Should we, on the basis  
23 of local choice and local freedom, and simply because  
24 maybe a small group of people finds that horrible, should  
25 we simply allow that type of sport to continue?



1           A     Sir, I think I know where you are going  
2 with the conversation and I respect your opinions. I am  
3 not here to impose my values on you. I am not familiar  
4 with cock fighting. I personally don't condone it. What  
5 I would like to suggest to you is that individuals in  
6 communities have rights. I'm not talking about law  
7 breaking, rape, pillage, robbery, and you bring up another  
8 area. I am not here to defend cock fighting. And if it  
9 occurred in your district, I would expect you would  
10 represent your people in the manner in which they presented  
11 it to you. I don't have a position on that. Along the  
12 line of your question is would I champion unlawful causes,  
13 and the answer is, no, sir, I would not.

14           Q     Well, suppose in my district I know for a  
15 fact that I have people who, as a matter of individual  
16 choice, they like to raise and train and breed pit bulls  
17 and other dogs for the purpose of fighting and killing  
18 each other and they actually, I think this is a profitable  
19 enterprise. Maybe they give the profits to charity.  
20 Should I, as a legislator, representing those individuals  
21 protect their individual choice? I mean, is that what you  
22 are advising me to do?

23           A     No, sir, I am not. I personally abhor  
24 that particular type of activity, however, it is not  
25 occurring in my district. I am not here to talk about

1 bull fights. It would be improper for me to suggest to you  
2 what you do in a case like that if your constituents came  
3 to you. I think that would be between you and your  
4 constituents.

5           The point I was trying to make earlier,  
6 that is what the constitution is all about. I know the  
7 question of right or wrong is not for me to decide.

8 I certainly have my opinions as do my opponents. I  
9 think you heard some things, I may want to agree with  
10 something else. My opponent mentioned the threats.

11 I find that very, very abhorring. And I am not here to  
12 be argumentative. I am not here to plead my own case.

13 But I have had several threats. I had my own children  
14 at home, when I was at work, people didn't identify  
15 themselves and it is not necessary for me to say it.

16 I could make points by saying it because they left me  
17 know who they were. It upset my family, offended my  
18 family and threatened them. I would be in her corner  
19 big time on an issue like that.

20           Q     But I think, you know, I perhaps have  
21 a different understanding about what this legislative  
22 process is about. It strikes me that we, in the  
23 Legislature, are engaged in making rules for our  
24 Commonwealth based on broad principles. And the broad  
25 principle that you have stated is we ought to allow local

1 communities to continue traditions that if other segments  
2 of the state find that objectionable, then that is of no  
3 relevance, and it seems to me, I mean, you apparently  
4 find pit bull fighting objectionable. Dog fights are  
5 objectionable. Cock fights may be objectionable. Frankly,  
6 I find them objectionable too. I don't think they should  
7 be going on in my district. And the reason I find them  
8 objectionable is that, and I think this is the central  
9 issue of this legislation, should we allow killing for  
10 amusement. That is what a pigeon shoot is about. That  
11 is what pit bull fighting is about, cock fighting, and  
12 frankly, based on that broad principle, I don't think we  
13 should allow it regardless of what the local community's  
14 preference might be.

15 (Applause.)

16 A Well, sir, one thing you will get from me  
17 is honesty and I respect your view for that and I respect  
18 the way you represent your community. I would not want to  
19 take it further, but we could go around the world with  
20 issues and cultures and religions and what we should do.  
21 I am not going to suggest what is right or wrong, but I  
22 do respect your opinion and I am proud that you would  
23 represent your constituency in that way. I hope that mine  
24 will represent me as they have and just as fervently.

25 REPRESENTATIVE McHALE. Thank you, Mr.

1 Chairman.

2 BY REPRESENTATIVE McHALE: (To Mr. Clemens)

3 Q We, who serve in the Legislature find our-  
4 selves in the difficult position of having to make judgments  
5 of right and wrong. We can't simply take a step back and  
6 rely on the constitution and hope that local values will  
7 prevail in a constructive way. We have to make choices,  
8 and one of those choices is being presented to us today.

9 You rely on, and I know you do it in good  
10 faith and with absolute sincerity, on the value of the  
11 local traditions. I would suggest to you that the ethical  
12 judgments brought to those traditions change over time.  
13 For instance, are you aware that for many years there was  
14 a strong tradition of hawk hunting in Schuylkill County?

15 A Yes, I am.

16 Q I am aware of that as well. I come from  
17 neighboring Lehigh County. That took place in my county as  
18 well as in Schuylkill, and I am not making a harsh judgment  
19 with regard to the people either in my own home county or  
20 in Schuylkill County. But the simple fact is for many years  
21 hunters would climb up on the rocks of Blue Mountain and  
22 shoot hawks, often eagles out of the air. And that tradition  
23 didn't stop until a statute came along and said, with the  
24 force of not only law but morality, that we will no longer  
25 accept that in our society. We have a similar question

1 being presented to us today. Shall we, in the words of  
2 Representative McNally, allow killing for amusement? You  
3 will not find a member of the General Assembly more  
4 supportive of hunting and sportsmanship than I am. I  
5 support deer hunting. I vigorously support pheasant  
6 hunting. I don't see the similarity between that type  
7 of sportsmanship and organized slaughter, where according  
8 to the gentleman who testified before you, 90 percent of  
9 the birds are shot when they are released from their cages  
10 or from their boxes.

11 Sir, forgive me for giving you a long  
12 introduction, but you introduced yourself as an active  
13 sportsman and a leader in some very reputable organizations.  
14 I assume from that introduction that you hunt. Is that  
15 correct?

16 A Yes, I do. That is correct.

17 Q Do you have a 90 percent kill rate when  
18 you hunt? If you went out after, let's say, a thousand  
19 pheasants over a period of years, would you be able to  
20 have a 90 percent kill rate over such a large quantity  
21 of birds?

22 A Of course, sir, in attempting to answering  
23 that honestly, there are a lot of variables. If I pursued  
24 them, if I was in range, a whole lot of things.

25 Q And those are significant, obviously, when

1 you are hunting in the field. They become less significant  
2 when it is an organized shoot. I mean, I see a distinction  
3 there in terms of sportsmanship. I have been in the field  
4 within the last year with hunting dogs in pursuit of  
5 pheasant and find that to be an honorable sport where  
6 the animal which is killed is thereafter consumed. I have  
7 no problem at all with that. But when you release a  
8 thousand birds in two or three hours and 90 percent of  
9 them are killed within a few feet of their cages, I  
10 just don't see the sportsmanship in that.

11 A Okay, sir, and I will agree with you on  
12 that to the extent I never said it was a sport. I said  
13 it was history, tradition. It is an event. And I would  
14 like to go a little further. There were a lot of  
15 inaccuracies portrayed by some of the folks today as to  
16 how it is conducted and why it is done, as I explained  
17 earlier and the range of the shotgun and so forth.

18 Q I was relying on the gentleman who is  
19 on your side of the issue in his description of how it  
20 takes place. But if there were inaccuracies, please  
21 correct them.

22 A Well, I was not suggesting that they were  
23 his inaccuracies. I was suggesting it was the other side.  
24 And for example, let me talk about one of the issues that  
25 he addressed or that you folks questioned him on was the

1 question of disease, and I am not here and I won't belabor  
2 the subject on disease. But it is, and this is my opinion,  
3 not his or the group's. But my knowledge of that is the  
4 disease is not like rabies where you contract it immediately,  
5 and indeed, it doesn't occur on the day of the shoot.  
6 More likely, what we are talking about here is large  
7 concentrations of these birds in a given area that cause  
8 health hazards. Much the same as you would have local  
9 legislation against somebody raising pigs in the center  
10 of the city and affiliated things. Not the pig by itself  
11 is the problem, but the related sanitation and so forth.  
12 So when you have the pigeons in a concentration, I think  
13 that is where the disease comes into play. And a further  
14 point is that these birds would carry a disease to farmers  
15 and flocks who would have, as you have seen, the avian  
16 flu and the various roosters and game roosters that are  
17 raised and turkeys and so forth. So I think the danger  
18 is in there.

19 Q Well let's talk about disease a little bit  
20 if I may before that. The gentleman, who is on your side  
21 of the issue said that the shoots which he attends,  
22 typically a thousand to 1500 birds are shot during a  
23 course of an individual event and that of the birds  
24 released about 90 percent are hit by the shotgun blast  
25 during the course of the event. Is that an accurate

1 picture of what you have seen from your own experience?

2 A That is possibly accurate, and I don't  
3 want to be evasive. I am not being evasive.

4 Q I understand.

5 A But the folks here said on one hand they  
6 are saying that we are killing a lot of the birds. Their  
7 testimony said that most of the time we are very poor  
8 marksmen and very few of them are hit. So I am a little  
9 confused. Yes, a large percentage are hit, and I would  
10 suggest to you, and please, sir, I am not being facetious  
11 and I respect their opinion, but that is the objective of  
12 the shoot to kill as many birds as you can.

13 Q All right, if that is the objective, and  
14 I appreciate your candor, that does remove the activity  
15 however from the world of sportsmanship in my view, and  
16 it comes close to the direct moral question raised by  
17 Representative McNally, and that is, will we allow killing  
18 for amusement. It is no longer sportsmanship when 90  
19 percent of the birds are hit. It is no longer sportsmanship  
20 when 1500 birds are slaughtered in a relatively few  
21 number of hours. And those are the numbers and the  
22 descriptions given by the gentleman on your side of the  
23 issue.

24 How many birds are shot at Hegins?

25 A I don't know the exact figure, but I will



1 accept those ranges from five to 8,000 depending on the  
2 participants.

3 Q Five to 8,000.

4 A I would say that is probably in the ball  
5 park.

6 Q And of the birds released is the kill rate  
7 previously given equally applicable? In other words,  
8 are 90 percent of the birds shot upon release?

9 A Again, I don't want to be pinned down to  
10 specifics and I don't have a problem with that. Again,  
11 I am not trying to be evasive. I don't know. So rather  
12 than lie about it, I would say it is a high rate. There  
13 is a book published. I have two with me, a 25 year  
14 anniversary book and a 50 year in which they say how many,  
15 25 out of 30 were shot by various people, how many it took  
16 to win the shoot.

17 Q I, too, don't mean to be argumentative.  
18 I go into these kinds of questions to draw the distinction  
19 between my experience in the field with regard to pheasant  
20 hunting, which is a genuine sport, and this kind of  
21 organized activity, which factually appears to me to be  
22 quite different.

23 Now we have heard references made here  
24 during the course of the day to boys being hired to snap  
25 the necks of the birds to kill the birds after the initial

1 shotgun blast. Would you describe that process? Does  
2 that take place?

3 A I don't think I have to. That is reasonably  
4 accurate because that is the most humane way if the bird  
5 is killed as it would be in a human being. If your neck  
6 or my neck is snapped, usually that is it. I am not here  
7 to advocate one way or other dispatching the birds. However,  
8 and again I don't want to get into a moral issue with you  
9 or any other member of the panel, but we can look at,  
10 for example, you mentioned deer hunting and we mentioned  
11 pheasant hunting, and as we get older, this statement  
12 came out earlier, we do mellow. Our values change a little  
13 bit and that is the way, if you will, that is the rhythm  
14 of life. And the farmers and miners of that valley are  
15 in tune with the rhythm of life, especially the farmers.

16 Q I live 20, 30 miles from there. I know  
17 the rhythm of that life and I have no problem with the  
18 taking of life for the consumption of food. I have a real  
19 problem with the taking of life for amusement. Again,  
20 my questions are focused on that kind of area. Are these  
21 boys hired to go out and snap the necks? Are they paid  
22 to do that?

23 A They do get some reimbursement as far as  
24 I know. I am not privy to that information. But they  
25 have to give up a day. They do get money and I don't think

1 there is anything wrong with that.

2 Q Who pays for that?

3 A I would think the Hegins Park Association  
4 pays them.

5 Q Are they paid by the hour or how is that  
6 done?

7 A I have no knowledge of that. As I say,  
8 I don't have a problem with it either.

9 Q You emphasized, both in your testimony  
10 earlier and in response to an initial question, the disease  
11 carrying characteristics of these birds. You have, I  
12 gather from your testimony, witnessed the boys going out  
13 to snap the necks. Do boys wear gloves to do that?

14 A Not when I was there. And may I clarify,  
15 in all those years I never shot in a shoot. However,  
16 last year I did with my son and my daughter was going  
17 to, however, she had a conflict. She may this year.  
18 I did that because I felt this was part, again, of  
19 custom, tradition, heritage that may be gone because a  
20 vocal minority is going to change my lifestyle. So I took  
21 my son there. And I don't have a problem with the way --  
22 I would rather that than see them suffer if they are not  
23 dispatched on the first shot.

24 Q But to the best of your knowledge, the  
25 young persons who go out to snap the necks do not take any

1 particular sanitary precautions?

2 A No, and as I alluded to earlier I don't  
3 think, and I am not here to disagree, apparently he read  
4 up on it, I don't know. They could be subject to some  
5 sort of disease.

6 Q Specifically he said that they carry at  
7 least 20 diseases as I recall, 20 or 30 that affect human  
8 beings in addition to ten that can affect other animals?

9 A As I said earlier, it is probably in large  
10 concentrations in the city. I don't know that occurs  
11 immediately on contact at a given shoot. I am not aware  
12 of it. I am not familiar with it. I am not an expert  
13 on it.

14 Q Well without belaboring it, it seems to me  
15 to be a clear inconsistency when those who support the  
16 shoot say in one breath that these animals must be  
17 destroyed because they are disease carrying and then  
18 in the next breath that they pay their own sons to go out  
19 and snap the necks without any significant sanitary  
20 precautions. You can't have it both ways. The argument,  
21 I think, is inherently contradictory.

22 Now also I am concerned, as I hear about  
23 disease and I hear again, simultaneously that there are  
24 food concessions at this particular event. Is that  
25 accurate?

1 A That is correct.

2 Q Are there food concessions?

3 A That is correct.

4 Q Well after these boys go out and snap  
5 the necks of, let's say, five or 6,000 pigeons is there  
6 any effort to guarantee the cleanliness of these  
7 concessions? Is there any effort to prevent the spread  
8 of disease? What is to stop a young boy one minute from  
9 snapping the neck of a pigeon and then without washing  
10 his hands going to one of these concessions and consuming  
11 a hot dog?

12 A I suppose there is none. Although I don't  
13 see the relationship in terms of the concessions are  
14 managed by people who have nothing to do with the bird  
15 killing. You are talking about an individual consumption.

16 Q I am very practical in my questioning, sir.  
17 You have indicated that indeed young boys are paid to go  
18 out and snap the necks. You have no problem with that.  
19 You believe that that is the most humane way to put the  
20 birds out of their misery.

21 A Right.

22 Q I have a young son. I know something  
23 about children and I am concerned about the very practical  
24 situation when young boys are going out into the field,  
25 snapping the necks of five or 6,000 birds, and then

1 periodically returning to the concession stands for the  
2 consumption of food. I see a real health risk there.

3 A May I ask, sir, is that, the health risk  
4 that you see to the individual?

5 Q To the boy, yes. It may be the person  
6 at the stand has clean hands. If a hot dog has been  
7 presented to a seven or eight year old boy who has been  
8 out snapping necks for the last two hours, that concerns  
9 me.

10 A If there is a problem with that, which I am  
11 not aware of, and that were corrected and these individuals  
12 were sanitized, washed, whatever it takes, that would  
13 relieve those fears?

14 Q Well, if the previous gentleman is correct,  
15 in talking about the disease carrying characteristics of  
16 these birds, that clearly is a problem.

17 Lastly, beer is served at this event?

18 A Beer has been served for many years and  
19 our opponents have striven to make that an issue. The  
20 issue is not beer no more than it is serving, as you suggest,  
21 of french fries or chicken dinners. You know, the shoot  
22 has nothing to do with beer.

23 Q I don't mind someone consuming french fries  
24 before he carries a shotgun. It bothers me if someone is  
25 consuming beer before he carries a shotgun.

1           A     I am in your corner, sir.

2           Q     Is the beer served only after the event or  
3 during the event?

4           A     The beer is served all day long. The  
5 shooters that I am familiar with do not participate in  
6 drinking beer no more than the same analogy would follow  
7 for driving. We know that there are people out there that  
8 drive drunk even with the law, but we have some pretty  
9 strict codes as far as the shoot and the rules are  
10 concerned of throwing people out if they imbibe in the  
11 alcohol and then go on to the range. My local club has  
12 a definite rule that beer will not even be in the vicinity  
13 in our local pistol and rifle club.

14          Q     I support your local club in that respect  
15 and have a real concern that we have people carrying  
16 firearms at an event where simultaneously beer is being  
17 served. I personally would feel much more comfortable  
18 if the policy adopted by your club were adopted by this  
19 shoot if it is allowed to continue, and that is, at best  
20 beer should be served only after the event has been  
21 completed. Not while people are carrying around shotguns.

22          A     And I share your concerns and I know we  
23 could go all day. It is not my intention to be argumentative,  
24 but I feel I must respond to that. And we both know as  
25 adults, mature adults, that the event is over at dark when

1 the last bird is shot, which is close to dark. And the  
2 people who come there for whatever reason, the fellowship  
3 and so forth, engage in the meals and so forth, certainly  
4 the shooters get meals, but there is a lot of the other  
5 people who participate in drinking the alcohol. That  
6 would effectively eliminate that particular refreshment  
7 for those individuals. As a personal choice, I may have  
8 a social drink occasionally. That is not the issue here.  
9 But those who drink, I think you will agree, well, we  
10 would have to eliminate it all together.

11 Q Well it just seems to me basic common sense  
12 that you don't mix shotguns and draft beer.

13 A I agree.

14 REPRESENTATIVE McHALE: Well, I think  
15 that principle of common sense is being violated by at  
16 least the method by which one particular shoot is being  
17 operated. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

18 CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE. Representative Reber.

19 REPRESENTATIVE REBER. Thank you, Mr.  
20 Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I have been around these hallowed  
21 halls for going on ten years, and the hypocrisy which is  
22 going on around here today is absolutely mystifying me.  
23 We hear statements killing for amusement, pheasant hunting  
24 being a genuine sport. I would daresay that there are a  
25 lot of legitimate licensed hunters that go out and hunt



1 whether it be for pheasant, deer or otherwise that do it  
2 for the amusement. I would also daresay that there are  
3 a tremendous amount of duly licensed hunters, good  
4 intention, that also go out and mix beer and what have you  
5 at the hunting cabins during regulated seasons for  
6 whatever the particular animal might be. I don't think  
7 there is any more, frankly I would think there is probably  
8 more abuse at that than there are at a particular function  
9 that we are hearing today at Hegins.

10 Frankly, Mr. Chairman, I think we have got  
11 Representative McHale going down that far aisle. We  
12 have Representative Piccola going down that far aisle,  
13 and if I were an advocate or an individual rather desirous  
14 of seeing pigeon shoots continue in the Commonwealth,  
15 I would be more concerned about going down the middle  
16 aisle and putting this bill in games and fish or health  
17 and welfare, regulate the concerns justifiably made today  
18 that I find in part very concerning. But nonetheless  
19 we regulate bag limits. We regulate type of shot. We  
20 regulate the hours of shooting. We regulate what is done  
21 with that particular carcass after the fact. I think  
22 there ought to be a hard look taken by the appropriate  
23 committee, Mr. Chairman, of this particular aspect and  
24 appropriately regulated. I think these are the type of  
25 things that should come out of a hearing like this. I

1 think there have been comments made that I find very  
2 concerning about the method in which this particular  
3 activity goes on. I think there are also historic  
4 traditions that we have been hearing about that certainly  
5 come to play in a lot of things we do.

6 BY REPRESENTATIVE REBER: (To Mr. Clemens)

7 Q Mr. Clemens, let me ask you one question.  
8 Did Fred Coleman shoot pigeons?

9 A Yes, sir.

10 Q It is getting my curiosity.

11 A I'm sorry, if I failed to mention that.

12 Q He was a renowned trap shooter. You did  
13 mention that.

14 A The terms sometimes are used interchangeably  
15 rightly or wrongly, and he did perform for the Queen of  
16 England that I am aware of and other heads of state.

17 Q And shot pigeons as live?

18 A Yes.

19 Q Let me ask you this, Mr. Clemens. Do  
20 you have any objection to a committee of this House of  
21 Representatives, and I am referring to the Games and Fish  
22 Committee, which more or less has jurisdiction over these  
23 type of regulatory aspects, in taking a look and coming up  
24 with the manner in which this is coming out? I frankly  
25 shoot. I frankly am a hunter. I frankly shoot trap and

1 skeet. I have never shot a live pigeon. But I find it  
2 kind of concerning that somebody is popping off with a  
3 12 gauge at some little pigeon running across the ground.  
4 Isn't given any, under the rules of the organization,  
5 isn't given the opportunity for that bird to be airborne,  
6 etc., etc., etc. Don't you think there ought to be some  
7 way to regulate this if it is in fact going on? Under  
8 the auspices of sportsmanship, if you will, that seems to  
9 be embodied, in my mind, in the game laws of this  
10 Commonwealth.

11 A That is not, sir, a yes or no answer. I  
12 like where you are coming from. However --

13 Q I'm in the minority so you better like it  
14 because I have been around here, as I've said, ten years,  
15 and I can see where this thing is going. So somebody  
16 better get it on fast track in the right direction or  
17 I see the direction it may be going. It is my own personal  
18 opinion.

19 A Again, I don't want to belabor it either --

20 Q Personally, I have been sitting here  
21 patiently listening and hearing the responses. Go ahead.  
22 I'm not going anywhere. I would like to know some of  
23 your regulatory concerns that you feel should be attended  
24 to if in fact you do feel there are abuses and what have  
25 you?

1                   CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE:  If I could just  
2 interrupt for a minute?  The direction we're going is  
3 the court reporter is running out of tape and I think she  
4 needs to rest her fingers.  We'll take a brief recess.

5                   (Brief recess.)

6                   CHAIRMAN CALTAGIRONE:  Could we continue  
7 on?

8 BY REPRESENTATIVE REBER:  (To Mr. Clemens)

9                   Q     Mr. Clemens, possibly to save some additional  
10 time and to allow you to give what I would hope would be an  
11 in-depth and detailed response, possibly you and some of  
12 your colleagues on the issue could provide, if you desire  
13 to do so, could provide the Committee through the Chairman,  
14 what you would feel would be a basic overall way in which  
15 these shoots if they were in any way to be tampered with  
16 by the Legislature of how they should in fact be regulated,  
17 operated, the health and sanitary concerns as well as  
18 sportsman principles, if you will, embodied in our game  
19 laws and common law if you will.  If you could provide  
20 some form of documentation that way of suggestions or  
21 considerations, I would appreciate it.  And obviously,  
22 if you have no desire to do that, I can understand that  
23 as well.  But I think that would be an assist certainly to  
24 myself and possibly to some other members of the Committee  
25 to know the way in which or the manner in which if this

1 was to be in any way, shape or form regulated or for that  
2 matter made illegal as proposed by the legislation. If  
3 we do act on that, it might be nice to have some input as  
4 to your thoughts on that. I would respectfully ask you  
5 to consider that. If you desire to do so, submit it to  
6 the Chairman. I am sure he would provide that to us.  
7 I think also the Games and Fish Committee might also be  
8 considered finding that of some probative worth as  
9 well if it would find its way into the hallowed halls of  
10 that Committee.

11 A I appreciate that opportunity, and could  
12 I have a brief moment to respond to certain of the  
13 philosophy?

14 Q Certainly.

15 A Okay, I see some inherent dangers in doing  
16 that in that some years ago we were allowed to shoot crows.  
17 And crows, while it was not done for amusement or,  
18 as you indicated earlier, other people indicated, it  
19 was part of the, in the Game Code and so forth. And  
20 then there was a sweeping bill was passed and it included  
21 crows. It didn't intend to do that, but that is what  
22 happened. So that now we can only shoot crows at certain  
23 times. And there is no food value and there is nothing  
24 done with them except that they are shot and they are not  
25 an endangered species.

1                   There are some other problems in that my  
2 worthy opponents are very knowledgeable in the ways of  
3 the Legislature. And that would be another opportunity  
4 for them to build to eventually, through bureaucracy and  
5 through the commissions, to have the thing regulated  
6 out of existence. That would be a concern.

7                   The other concern that I have is that in  
8 recent memory we are seeing in the newspapers a lot of  
9 dissension over who controls the Game Commission, for  
10 example, and hatcheries. And if the Game Commission becomes  
11 politicized, as I have read and been brought to understand,  
12 there is nothing to suggest that without due process such  
13 as we are privy here to today, some individual could,  
14 with one fell swoop, make a decision that all of a sudden  
15 there will be no shoot and that could be done without  
16 the benefit of what the constitution has guaranteed us  
17 and I am proud to be a part of here today. So I am  
18 very guarded in allowing just some small commission that  
19 can be politically controlled to make those decisions for  
20 me. I like to work through the legislative process.

21                   ACTING CHAIRMAN BLAUM: Any more questions?

22                   (No response.)

23                   Thank you for coming. The next witnesses  
24 for and against are Mr. Sheldon Gitman. Mr. Gitman in  
25 favor of the legislation and Mr. James Hollingsworth opposed.

1                   Mr. Gitman, if you can briefly go over  
2 your testimony and Mr. Hollingsworth will follow you and  
3 the *Committee* will ask some questions.

4                   MR. GITMAN. Before I begin, gentlemen,  
5 thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify before  
6 you. There is a text that I prepared if you care to  
7 follow my testimony.

8                   My name is Sheldon Gitman. I am a resident  
9 of Schuylkill County since 1954. I am President of  
10 Ashland Shirt Corporation employing 330 people in Ashland,  
11 Pennsylvania and distributing our products nationwide under  
12 the name of Gitman Brothers.

13                   The move to Pennsylvania changed my life  
14 for it opened the whole world of shooting sports to me.  
15 I started shooting rifle and pistol at the old Peacock  
16 Street Armory in Pottsville. I still have the first ring  
17 neck pheasant I shot, stuffed and standing tall on a wooden  
18 stand upon which is a plaque that reads "Shot by Shelly  
19 Thanksgiving 1955." From these beginnings I became  
20 totally involved with shooting, from gun collecting,  
21 reloading ammunition to competition. In 1961 I became  
22 a life member of both the National Rifle Association and  
23 the American Trapshooting Association and just two years  
24 ago, I joined the United States Sporting Clays Association  
25 as a charter member. I've hunted woodchuck and pheasant

1 in Schuylkill and Berks Counties, ducks and geese on the  
2 Susquehanna at Hoover's Island and at Lake Mattamuskeet  
3 and Okracoke Island in the Carolinas as well as the tidewater  
4 of the Chesapeake Bay at Easton, Maryland. I've hunted  
5 dove in Israel and grouse on the peat bogs of northern  
6 Scotland.

7 My interest was not just confined to hunting,  
8 but I became involved in competitive shooting, participating  
9 almost every weekend for 20 years in American trap all  
10 over the United States and in particular the Grand American  
11 Trapshoot. In the last eight years our interest turned  
12 to the difficult sport of International Trap or Olympic  
13 Clay Pigeon. In pursuing this discipline I still continued  
14 to travel to such places as Quantico, Virginia, Fort  
15 Benning, Georgia in the east, San Diego, Los Angeles and  
16 San Francisco in the west, Lackland Air Force Base in San  
17 Antonio, Texas in the south to Edmonton and Montreal in  
18 Canada in the north. I travel internationally from Wales,  
19 Scotland and England to Italy, Cypress and Israel. As  
20 Clay Pigeon Chairman for the United States Committee Sports  
21 for Israel, I will once again be leading the U.S. team  
22 to Israel to compete this summer in the Maccabiah games.  
23 Nowhere in all these travels was a live bird used as a  
24 target. Pigeon shooting is prohibited in most foreign  
25 countries and at least 45 states in these United States.



1 They come to Pennsylvania to shoot live birds because it  
2 is banned in New York and New Jersey.

3 As you can see I enjoy guns and anything  
4 to do with guns and would strongly oppose any restrictions  
5 on gun ownership or travel with guns for sporting purposes.  
6 I do not view H.B. 696 as an anti-hunting or gun control  
7 bill but one that should be strongly supported by every  
8 legitimate gun owner. Let me explain:

9 In 1961 I started shooting clay targets  
10 in Hegins, Pennsylvania and in 1962 I joined my friends  
11 on Labor Day and shot pigeons at the Coleman Shoot. This  
12 was the first time that I shot live birds in a non-  
13 hunting situation. It was highly distasteful seeing all  
14 those dead and wounded birds on a pile serving no purpose  
15 other than having been a target, rather than a meal which  
16 the game birds provided. Neither was it challenging or  
17 sporting. As a result I tried unsuccessfully in 1963  
18 to organize a clay pigeon shoot at the Hegins Trap Club  
19 for those shooters who would prefer not to kill live birds.  
20 Being totally unsupported I once again shot the Coleman  
21 Shoot...for the last time.

22 In shotgun shooting, there is no comparison  
23 between the difficulty of hitting a heavy, slow-moving  
24 pigeon, some of whom can hardly fly, with a fast-moving  
25 clay target. Some of the birds when released do not fly

1 and are shot on the ground so that the shooter can call  
2 for another bird. Hitting a moving target in mid-air at  
3 varying speeds, angles, and distances involves the total  
4 coordination of eyes, body and mind. This certainly is  
5 more satisfying for the sportsman who really wants to test  
6 his skill. The fast-growing shooting discipline of  
7 Sporting Clays involving the release of clay targets under  
8 hunting situations, along with trap and skeet shooting is  
9 certainly more rewarding for the shotgun enthusiast. When  
10 these sports are so readily available, it is certainly  
11 hard for me to understand how some pigeon shooters can go  
12 one step further and resort to the practice of shooting  
13 "Brushed Birds." This involves mutilating the bird so  
14 that it would fly in a more erratic manner and thus be  
15 a more difficult target. This is done by breaking a  
16 wing, sticking a pin with a paper streamer into the bird,  
17 or burning his eyes with a cigarette.

18                   Because of our opposition, my family and I  
19 have experienced various threats. Our mailbox has been  
20 exploded eight times. We have had anonymous phone calls,  
21 dead animals in our mailbox, our children taunted on the  
22 school bus, and nails in our driveway on two occasions.  
23 One of which occurred in our driveway and at our local  
24 Reedsville barracks on the morning of the Coleman Labor  
25 Day Shoot in 1986 and succeeded in flattening the tires of

1 a number of State Police cruisers.

2 All of us are well aware of the recent  
3 sordid incidents that have occurred with the illegal use  
4 of guns. In the light of this bad publicity the vast  
5 majority of legitimate gun owners of Pennsylvania who do  
6 not shoot live birds for targets should unite to support  
7 H.B. 696. Respectable sportsmen do not want their ownership  
8 and use of guns to be tainted or threatened any further.  
9 Thank you.

10 (Applause.)

11 ACTING CHAIRMAN BLAUM: Thank you, Mr.  
12 Gitman. Mr. Hollingsworth.

13 MR. HOLLINGSWORTH: My name is Jim  
14 Hollingsworth. I am the General Manager of Pre-Golf  
15 in Knoxville, Pennsylvania. We import fine sporting  
16 shotguns. But I am really here in a role as a pigeon  
17 shooter. I only heard about the hearings on Tuesday.  
18 So I am doing this by the seat of my pants. I don't  
19 have a prepared statement.

20 My credentials, other than trips to  
21 Israel or to a South American shoot are not as similar  
22 to Mr. Gitman's in a sense that I grew up as a quail and  
23 dove shooter and hunter in Florida. I am a member,  
24 a life member of the U.S.S.C.A. and also a member of  
25 the American Trapshooting Association and am on the

1 National Advisory Committee for the New National Sport  
2 and Clay Association.

3 I walked up here to try to answer a couple  
4 of questions that concern me because there seem to be  
5 misstatements of facts as I know them. Particularly to  
6 the gentleman here regarding the comparison of shooting  
7 skills between hunting, pigeon shooting and also regarding  
8 the drinking and the use, I think the misuse of the word  
9 amusement, in relation to pigeon shooting. But since I  
10 listened to Mr. Gitman's very articulate statement, maybe  
11 I want to try one of those, again, from the seat of my  
12 pants.

13 I have shot olympic traps, I have shot  
14 sporting clays, and the first thing that is really  
15 important to say is that there is no clay target game  
16 that does provide the same variation of targets that  
17 pigeon shooting does provide. I shoot sporting clays  
18 on the average of probably three or four times a week  
19 all over the country. I have not, on the other hand,  
20 ever been to the Hegins Shoot so I can't really speak  
21 to that specifically. I have shot at two different clubs  
22 in Kentucky. I shot in, what is now considered the best  
23 shoot in the country, in North Carolina, I have shot in  
24 two places in Pennsylvania. I have been shooting pigeons  
25 for about five years and simply have to say right from the

1 outset, I have never seen any of the type of shooting  
2 that involves broken wings, inserting pins, burning of  
3 eyes. I simply would not be able to stomach or to stand  
4 that. There is no way that I could stand such a thing.  
5 I do not, for the same reason hunt deer. I do not shoot  
6 anything with big brown eyes. I am a bird hunter strictly.  
7 I have never, there are often birds shot on the ground,  
8 and quite often that is as a result when the bird hits  
9 the ground, he is called a no bird and often the call  
10 is slow or simultaneous with the shooters going ahead  
11 and dispatching the bird. In fact, it is done to clear  
12 the ring. But that is rare. If you shoot 50 birds at  
13 a pigeon shoot and you have one bird that just lands on  
14 the ground and is shot on the ground, that would be,  
15 I would say, a high average. Pigeon shooters, and the  
16 point I think has not been made, pay a fairly substantial  
17 amount of money to shoot. They pay three or four dollars  
18 a bird. They are not going to go someplace where they  
19 shoot a diseased bird or a weak bird or to shoot a bird  
20 that is not a compelling target.

21 I have a shooting average, since I have  
22 been shooting sporting clays, better than 90 percent shooting  
23 wild quail. I emphasize wild. I will not shoot a pen-  
24 raised pheasant or quail. No reason to. There is no  
25 challenge to it for me. Those people behind me have seen

1 me shoot pigeons know my average pigeons is considerably  
2 lower. It is a profoundly tough target. And I just,  
3 I think it is very important to make that point.

4 The next point I think should be clarified  
5 a little bit is the whole idea of disease. Our argument  
6 regarding the disease of birds and the trap boys who handle  
7 the birds, trap girls as well. We don't shoot diseased  
8 birds. If we went someplace and the birds were diseased,  
9 we would not go back again and the fellow who ran the  
10 shoot would be out of business. You are looking for a  
11 challenging target. The tougher the bird, the better.  
12 Just the same way as Mr. Gitman knows that the same reason  
13 that people are moving so profoundly to sporting clays  
14 because those clay targets are so much more challenging,  
15 more variable than regular trap or skeet targets. But  
16 we are not shooting diseased birds. These kids, and I  
17 have only once in five years ever seen anybody with the  
18 rubber gloves and the mask. They are not diseased birds.  
19 The disease argument I think is germane when you say in  
20 an urban population, an over-concentration of pigeons  
21 can become diseased and can spread disease to humans.  
22 Now we're not taking diseased birds out to shoot. But  
23 we are, when those birds are trapped, when those birds  
24 are trapped in the city, we are reducing the population  
25 which reduces the possibility of disease growing up in the

1 city. I think that really needs to be clarified. The  
2 birds are not diseased. The birds are carriers of disease,  
3 but I would submit any bird that is carrying the disease  
4 and is infected with disease would never make it to the  
5 shoot.

6 Birds are not shot on the ground. They are  
7 not shot at 30 feet away, and they are a profoundly  
8 challenging target. The reasons that the scores are so  
9 high, you are paying two, three, four dollars a bird to  
10 shoot. The average shooter does not go to shoot those  
11 birds. The people that go to shoot pigeons are among the  
12 best shotgunners in the country and indeed in the world  
13 and that is a very important point to make. You cannot  
14 compare the profound number of 100 straights that are  
15 shot at Vandalia, targets on a predictable path, by a  
16 large number of people with the scores shot by a group  
17 of people who represent the elite of their sport and some  
18 hang on amateurs like myself who also go to the shoot.  
19 Those are not valid comparisons.

20 However you all vote, I simply hope that  
21 you vote based on the real facts of what a pigeon shoot is.  
22 Again, I am at a disadvantage. The Hegins Shoot seems  
23 to be at the center of the controversy and I haven't seen  
24 that. But I will say this, in almost anything, whenever I  
25 hear somebody sit at a hearing table, whether it is in the

1 drug industry or the automobile industry and talk about  
2 self-regulation, I really hear that guy saying leave us  
3 alone. In one sense I am begging leave us alone, but in  
4 another sense it is absolutely true that a pigeon shoot  
5 is incredibly well self-regulated because it is a  
6 competition. There is a gentlemanly and gentle-womanly  
7 sense of fair play among the shooters and people that  
8 violate that sense are simply not tolerated. It is  
9 simply a good sport in that sense. And we don't shoot  
10 bad targets and we don't mutilate birds, and I frankly,  
11 I have seen the 55-gallon drums full of birds, but I  
12 have never seen bloody body parts strewn all over a  
13 pigeon shoot. There is no question about it. It is  
14 important to clarify the image of what the shoot is,  
15 and there is, it is not a bunch of Yahoos out there  
16 trying to see how many birds they can blow away. The  
17 affairs are not somber by any means, but I would say  
18 really and truly, and this is hard to say to people who  
19 have never been to one, who have not seen a pigeon shoot,  
20 have not shot a pigeon, they are respectful and they are  
21 respectful of the fact that, yes, there is something  
22 dying out on that pigeon range.

23 In that sense, the traditions and ethics  
24 that have been talked about are important ones and they  
25 are ones that speak to broad principles that I think are



1 respected in this country. If we speak of a change in  
2 a majority of ethical views and then we simultaneously  
3 turn around and say only seven percent of the people in  
4 the country hold hunting licenses, in fact you will be  
5 here next month or next year talking to the same group  
6 of people, who do not support fishing, about hunting  
7 pheasants and hunting deer. I am not a deer hunter.  
8 It would give me no pleasure. It would give me no thrill  
9 of quest or anything and that is just a personal thing.  
10 But I can tell you that shooting a pigeon is a very  
11 challenging thing to do. I perfectly respect, I am the  
12 owner of a dog that was found run over and broken up on  
13 the road and I have had him for eight years. I perfectly  
14 respect the legitimate goals of preventing the abuse  
15 of animals. I would be anxious to see what types of  
16 animal abuse were compared to the child abuse and so on  
17 in the study. I would guess off the top of my head that  
18 it has nothing to do with somebody dispatching anything  
19 with a shotgun.

20 So moving on again to just a few things  
21 that I picked up, and again I am talking from the seat of  
22 my pants, to the beer issue, the competitors don't drink.  
23 That is not because there is a rule or anything else,  
24 but it is because they are in competition. There is  
25 beer at baseball games. Maybe that is a bad analogy,

1 because we've had all these books come out about the  
2 Phillies, but we don't, as far as we know the players are  
3 not down there drinking. And I think that is an important  
4 point to make when you talk about the safety and so on  
5 and so forth. It is simply, you've got a group of very  
6 serious competitors. Seriousness indicated by the fact  
7 they are paying a lot of money to shoot and they are not  
8 going out there and just throwing away 250 on 25 trap  
9 targets or ten dollars on a round of sporting clay and  
10 I think that is an important point to make.

11 I think the idea of shooting something for  
12 the table is possibly offset by the fact that we are  
13 reducing the population of potentially diseased carrying  
14 birds. Again, not by shooting diseased birds but by  
15 reducing the population by the trapping around areas where  
16 those birds do propose a certain menace. And it occurs  
17 to me that logically if you can ban pigeon shooting where  
18 there is a social and also an economic benefit, not  
19 a profound one for Pennsylvania, but certainly a profound  
20 one for people who have the shoots, kids are employed,  
21 people who sell food well away from the pigeons, the  
22 local hotels and local restaurants, if you can ban  
23 something that has both a social and an economic  
24 justification to it, you can ban the trapping of birds  
25 that ends in that result. It is almost more logical to

1 start first with the raising of birds specifically to  
2 shoot them and to release them. All of a sudden you are  
3 talking, don't talk to us. Go talk first to people that  
4 release game birds and to your preserve owners and so on  
5 and so forth. You guys will agree with me on that probably,  
6 but the point is logically that is where you ought to  
7 start. You shouldn't start with the pigeon shoots because  
8 we have what appear to be two compelling reasons to keep  
9 these shoots going.

10 Again, my concern is if you haven't seen  
11 a pigeon shoot and you are a shooter and have never shot  
12 a pigeon, then you need, I just hope that what I say here  
13 can give you a little bit of facts so you have a little  
14 more objective view of what it is that goes on at pigeon  
15 shoots. I think that is quite important.

16 That is it from the seat of my pants.

17 ACTING CHAIRMAN BLAUM: We will entertain  
18 some questions then. Representative Piccola.

19 BY REPRESENTATIVE PICCOLA: (To Mr. Hollingsworth)

20 Q I'm sorry, sir, I did not get your name  
21 at the beginning of your testimony.

22 A Jim Hollingsworth.

23 Q Mr. Hollingsworth, you have obviously  
24 participated in pigeon shoots throughout Pennsylvania?

25 A In two clubs in Pennsylvania, two in

1 Kentucky and two in North Carolina on probably about a  
2 six or seven or eight times a year basis.

3 Q I have here a fact sheet on live pigeon  
4 shoots in Pennsylvania prepared by Trans-Species Unlimited  
5 in answer to the question where do the birds come from.  
6 A small percentage of pigeons are trapped in cities and  
7 farmers' barns. A majority of them, however, are purchased  
8 from breeders who raise them for the explicit purpose of  
9 being shot for target practice. Is that true?

10 A No, sir, I do not believe it is. I know  
11 of no shoot at all, no shoot whatsoever in any of the  
12 three states that I have mentioned where the club owner  
13 would even consider using bred birds. I heard of one  
14 in Illinois where that is all the man does and he  
15 apparently some way thinks they fly better. I have never  
16 been to his shoots. No one would use a pen-raised bird  
17 because a pen-raised bird can never fly as well as a bird  
18 that has either been in the wild or have a large area  
19 that he can fly over. And use to being in the wild  
20 over corn fields or in the wild over the Delaware Bay  
21 and the Schuylkill River. So the short answer is no.  
22 I don't believe that to be true.

23 Q Representative Reber raised the question  
24 of using the word shooting for amusement and there is  
25 a variety of ways that you can get amusement. You can get

1 amusement I assume, and I am not a hunter and I don't own  
2 a gun, so I don't know what that kind of amusement is.  
3 But from talking to hunters and hearing your testimony,  
4 I am assuming the entire sport of hunting offers amusement.  
5 Am I inaccurate in that?

6           A     Amusement is a funny word because it sort  
7 of carries, it got a little bit of a pejorative sense,  
8 you know, amusement park or that is amusing. It is a  
9 little bit of a derogatory term. If you use amusement in  
10 a somewhat more meaningful sense, that there is a certain  
11 profound pleasure. In the sense of hunting, there is  
12 the query, searching query, being outdoors, there is  
13 the performance with shotgun. In the sense of pigeon  
14 shooting there is the camaraderie. The fact that you  
15 shoot together with a large number of people who are  
16 equally or similarly skilled and have the same interests,  
17 and there is more profoundly the skill with the shotgun.  
18 It is tougher in bird shooting. There is no question  
19 about it, especially because of the competitive aspect.  
20 You kill a lower percentage, for instance, of dove at  
21 a dove shoot because they are such great a variety,  
22 but there is great variety in pigeons and it is simply  
23 the most challenging competitive shotgun sport. And I  
24 think I speak with some authority to that.

25           Q     And then there is the type of amusement

1 that the sadist would get from burning dogs and doing  
2 other types of things to animals.

3 A The pleasure is not in killing. The  
4 pleasure is not in killing.

5 Q From your experience do any of the shooters  
6 that you have ever participated in derive that type of  
7 amusement?

8 A I have seen, and honestly I've seen people  
9 jump up and down more over a smoking clay target than  
10 I ever had at a pigeon shoot and say, oh boy, wow. It  
11 is just not part of the shoot. There is not a sadistic  
12 pleasure. It is a challenge, and again, the air  
13 that I would describe, the shoots that I have been to,  
14 is a respectful air. Maybe the shoots that I have been to  
15 do not have the public nature of Hugins where a lot of  
16 people come in from the community. They are more private  
17 shoots where you have the shooters generally and their  
18 families. But in terms of amusement, I think again of  
19 going to an amusement park or being amused by a comedian  
20 or something like that. It is not really a spectators'  
21 sport. People go and watch their own family members,  
22 their own loved ones or their shooters go around, but  
23 you don't go out there and take pleasure in watching the  
24 bird be shot. You take pleasure in seeing the skill of  
25 the shooter in the same way that you take pleasure that

1 most people do not go to a football game to see somebody  
2 hurt. They go to see the skill of the play is the best  
3 analogy I can think of.

4 REPRESENTATIVE PICCOLA: I have attended,  
5 on one occasion, the Hegins Shoot. It is the only one  
6 I have ever attended and I must say that the decorum that  
7 I witnessed from the shooters at that particular event  
8 coincides and certainly conforms with the decorum that  
9 you describe here today. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

10 ACTING CHAIRMAN BLAUM: Representative  
11 McHale.

12 REPRESENTATIVE McHALE: Thank you,  
13 Representative Blaum. Mr. Gitman, I want to simply say  
14 that I agree with you completely and I think you have a  
15 very valid sense of what is true sportsmanship particularly  
16 involving the use of firearms in Pennsylvania.

17 Mr. Hollingsworth, you and I have a  
18 difference of opinion which may not surprise either one  
19 of us.

20 MR. HOLLINGSWORTH: You and I should go  
21 sporting clay shooting in Maryland and then we should go  
22 to a pigeon shoot.

23 REPRESENTATIVE McHALE: I would come with  
24 you on the first trip but not the second.

25 (Applause.)

1                   As a matter of fact -- you indicated we  
2 should be aware of the facts and must of what I heard  
3 was opinion. So let's explore a couple of issues if we  
4 may.

5                   MR. HOLLINGSWORTH: You've got to remember  
6 though the facts for one person are quire often simply  
7 as deeply held opinion. One man's freedom fighters and  
8 the other man's terrorists.

9                   REPRESENTATIVE McHALE: Yes. And we might  
10 have a difference of opinion on that issue also.

11 BY REPRESENTATIVE McHALE: (To Mr. Hollingsworth)

12                  Q     In any event, you presented a scenario for  
13 which I would like to have a factual basis. As I  
14 understand your argument, somewhat contrary to what the  
15 gentleman on your side of the issue testified to earlier,  
16 you claim that the birds which are shot at these events  
17 are not diseased. Is that correct?

18                  A     I claim that they are potential carriers  
19 of disease, but generally no. I think we are shooting  
20 healthy birds generally. Birds which have been culled  
21 from a population of the city to reduce that population.

22                  Q     Could you tell me how that culling process  
23 takes place so that we can be sure that we have only the  
24 diseased birds in big cities but the healthy birds brought  
25 out to the countryside for the shoots?



1           A     The culling does not take place when the  
2 birds are trapped. I am not trying to --

3           Q     When does it take place?

4           A     The culling takes place naturally as it does  
5 with anything diseased when the birds die out and when  
6 the birds are sorted for the shoot. Birds that are sick  
7 birds are discarded if there are any there.

8           Q     How are they testing for disease at that  
9 point?

10          A     It is not a matter of testing, the people  
11 that handle them, the trappers and people that handle them  
12 recognize a healthy and vital bird.

13          Q     How do they do that?

14          A     By their experience in running shoots.  
15 It is in their profound interest to make sure that every  
16 bird that goes into those boxes is a healthy bird.

17          Q     So in conclusion, if a bird looks healthy,  
18 it is healthy?

19          A     I can tell you an interesting thing is  
20 they can reach into a box, and again, I am not a pigeon  
21 handler, I am not a raiser or breeder of pigeons or  
22 anything like that. I know people that trap pigeons,  
23 in my conversations with them, they can reach into a  
24 box of birds and they can find the healthiest, strongest  
25 flyer in that box.

1 Q And based on that skill -- they are able  
2 to determine whether or not that bird is carrying micro-  
3 biotic disease?

4 A No, they are able to determine whether or  
5 not it is a diseased bird. The point, the issue --

6 Q How do they do that?

7 A The issue of disease is not one, you know,  
8 we are taking these birds out and exterminating them  
9 because all pigeons are diseased. The issue of disease  
10 is the pigeon shooting, the trapping of pigeons reduces  
11 the greater population --

12 Q I understand your argument completely.  
13 I find that silly in light of modern science. It is to  
14 me ludicrous to argue that somehow if we leave the birds  
15 behind in the big city, at that point congested in the  
16 big city they will produce disease. But some kind of  
17 culling process, based on how a bird feels, is adequate  
18 to determine that the birds brought from the city to the  
19 countryside are among the healthy few?

20 A No, the issue is not the healthy few.  
21 We are starting to move to the silly I agree. The issue  
22 is not that they are the healthy few. The issue is  
23 are they strong flyers.

24 Q No, sir, they may well be strong flyers.

25 A The image that you are trying to portray,

1 it seems to me, is that these birds are taken out, the  
2 boys snap their necks and go eat their hotdogs and so on  
3 is that somehow they are all carrying diseases. I don't  
4 think that that is the fact. I assume that only a very  
5 small percentage of the birds are carrying disease. They  
6 are potential disease carriers in the city.

7 Q I don't want to push that any further.

8 A And I am not saying somebody with their  
9 fingers can find --

10 Q Go ahead.

11 A And I am not saying somebody with their  
12 fingers can find microorganisms. I am not arguing that  
13 whatsoever.

14 Q That is what we are talking about in terms  
15 of disease. A strong flyer is not necessarily a healthy  
16 bird in the sense of being non-disease carrying. I  
17 mean I think we can --

18 A Sure.

19 Q I happen to agree with the gentleman on  
20 your side of the issue who testified earlier that a  
21 substantial number of these birds can carry disease.

22 A I think a substantial number of them can.  
23 I agree with that. But I don't agree with the image that  
24 they are all diseased and that everybody that goes out  
25 handling the birds is being subjected to a massive dosage

1 of microorganisms. That's the only clarification I wanted  
2 to make. I think for the most part they are not diseased  
3 birds, but I know they have the potential to carry disease  
4 and probably some percentage of them are diseased.

5 Q If I believed that, I wouldn't send my  
6 son out to snap necks with his bare hands and thereafter  
7 send him over to the concession stand to buy a hotdog

8 A I wouldn't do that either.

9 Q Well either your argument is correct or  
10 the gentleman who testified on your side of the issue  
11 earlier is correct, but you both cannot be correct.  
12 There is no culling process. There is a seat-of-the-pants  
13 judgment that this bird is a good flyer, this one isn't,  
14 and I think that is very different from determining which  
15 bird is healthy.

16 A I am not talking about health tests though.

17 Q You were earlier in your testimony.

18 A Oh, no. I was saying it is to their  
19 benefit to have strong flying birds, and I am not suggesting  
20 that they can tell microorganisms, no. The point is  
21 that the birds don't make it, they don't make it anywhere  
22 near the pigeon range if they are carrying disease.  
23 Because there is a period of time --

24 Q No, I don't think you have any scientific  
25 basis for that assertion.

1           A     I don't. I don't. The fact is strongly  
2 held opinions and understanding situations.

3           Q     Sometimes we mix a little science with  
4 our opinions.

5                     Now, with regard to the characterization  
6 of these events, you seem to describe these events as being  
7 events that involve first-rate shooters who come from great  
8 distance and who treat this almost as a professional  
9 activity?

10          A     I wouldn't say professional is the right  
11 word, but they are first-rate shooters.

12          Q     All right, we are in agreement at least  
13 on that description.

14          A     Yes.

15          Q     I hear from other people that these are  
16 community events where people by day are doctors, lawyers,  
17 farmers, grab their shotguns and come out for the weekend  
18 to participate in this activity, but it is a community  
19 event. Which is it? Or is Hegins something unique?

20          A     I think Hegins is something unique, but  
21 I know that it is attended by many first-rate shooters.  
22 I have not been to the shoot. People that I know, the  
23 circle of shooters that I travel in, all go to Hegins.  
24 I have not been in the state, I only moved in the state  
25 six months ago. I have never been in Pennsylvania at Labor

1 Day to go to the shoot. Had I been here, I would have gone.  
2 So, I can't speak to the actual demographics of the shooters  
3 at Hegin's.

4 Q The last thing, I think you made a very fine  
5 point, somewhat inadvertently, when you talked about beer  
6 at baseball games. My concern is precisely that, which  
7 you I think will recognize a moment after you made that  
8 comparison. You indicate that at baseball games the  
9 players don't consume the beer as they are playing. I  
10 have got some softball teams in the Lehigh Valley to which  
11 I would like to introduce you where one or two of the  
12 players on occasion might just drink a half a glass of  
13 beer before he goes to bat. When it is a baseball bat,  
14 the risk is minimal. When it is a shotgun, the risk is  
15 significant. I think that it is absolutely inexcusable  
16 to mix shotguns and draft beer. In my view, beer should  
17 not be served at an event where firearms are being utilized  
18 at least until that event is completed and that it is  
19 utterly irresponsible and violative of common sense  
20 to try and safely mix the two. It cannot be done. So  
21 I think that your point about baseball games, at least  
22 in my experience with softball, is very apt and a very  
23 constructive comparison.

24 A Yes. I agree with you totally. But let  
25 me just draw again another distinction. Again, I haven't

1 been to the Hegins Shoots. The shoots I have been to,  
2 for the most part, unless they are large shoots that  
3 include family members and so on, alcohol is not served  
4 until after the competition is over. But at many shoots  
5 it is if there is a large contingent of spouses, boyfriends,  
6 girlfriends, etc. Again, this is opinion but it is a fact  
7 in the sense that I can categorically state that I have  
8 never seen, in the five years of pigeon shooting, somebody  
9 take a drink who was involved in the competition. I  
10 do not speak for all of the shooters or anything like that.

11 Q I am certain --

12 A You may be right. It may not be a wise  
13 choice for them to make at Hegins.

14 Q I gather at the smaller events that you  
15 have attended, where I suspect there is a higher degree  
16 of professional involvement, shooters such as yourself,  
17 that may be the case. But as we open up these kind of  
18 events to the general public and have a larger number of  
19 shooters, my belief is that 98 percent of those shooters  
20 would not dream of touching a beer before they would go  
21 up and shoot a shotgun. But if only two percent do  
22 consume a beer before they go up to the line, that poses,  
23 in my view, a serious risk to public safety. Not to  
24 deter 98 percent but rather to prevent an injury being  
25 caused by the two percent, I think there has to be, at a

1 minimum, a much more stringent separation of shooters  
2 and drinkers.

3 A Fair enough. And one of the things that  
4 we do do, going to recent sporting clay shooting, they  
5 gave you two colored dots to wear on your badge. In order  
6 to shoot you had to have a badge. In order to shoot you  
7 had to have a green dot. Now when you finish shooting,  
8 they peeled off the green dot. You could no longer shoot  
9 because you didn't have a green dot. Then if you paid  
10 to have something to drink you had a yellow dot. If,  
11 the minute you took a drink they peeled off your yellow dot,  
12 if you showed up without a yellow dot, then you could not  
13 shoot. That is a reasonable regulation, but that  
14 pertains to the regulation of serving alcohol and is not  
15 a justification for banning pigeon shooting anymore than  
16 the fact that two percent of the population or more can  
17 go out and kill people in an automobile, we don't ban  
18 driving. We ban the drunk driving or the serving of  
19 alcohol as they do in New Jersey and so on and so forth  
20 and it is two different issues. The fact that two percent  
21 of the people might take a drink doesn't mean you ban --

22 Q Those are not two different issues at  
23 Hegin. They are perhaps at the events that you attend,  
24 but they are interrelated issues at Hegin.

25 A But you don't ban the shoot I think in order



1 to prevent the two percent from abuse.

2 Q I agree. I think liquor control is a  
3 better way to approach that issue. I would ban the shoot  
4 for different reasons.

5 A Yes, exactly.

6 REPRESENTATIVE McHALE: Thank you, Mr.  
7 Chairman.

8 ACTING CHAIRMAN BLAUM: Thank you, Mr.  
9 McHale. Any other questions? Representative McNally.

10 REPRESENTATIVE McNALLY: Mr. Hollingsworth,  
11 I understand you have not attended the Hegin's Pigeon Shoot.  
12 Have you attended the Coleman Shoot?

13 MR. GITMAN: That is the same thing. That  
14 is one in the same thing.

15 MR. HOLLINGSWORTH: It is called I believe  
16 the Fred T. Coleman Shoot, am I correct, and it is held  
17 at Hegin's.

18 BY REPRESENTATIVE McNALLY: (To Mr. Hollingsworth)

19 Q It seems to me from your testimony, the  
20 impression that I have is that you participate in live  
21 pigeon shoots held at private clubs, rod and gun clubs,  
22 that kind of thing?

23 A Yeah, private may not be the right word.  
24 It is not held by the public parks department as I  
25 understand Hegin's is. There are places that anybody can

1 walk into. I am not a member of any of these places.

2 Q But it strikes me the description of the  
3 pigeon shoot in Hegins is sort of a wide open event where  
4 a great many people can attend, and as Mr. McHale indicated,  
5 in fact people who were just sort of casual shotgun or  
6 hunters, shotgun shooters or hunters attend and do attend  
7 and participate. Would that be an accurate description?

8 A I think Mr. Gitman might be able to answer  
9 that better.

10 REPRESENTATIVE McNALLY: Would that be an  
11 accurate description of the Hegins type of shoot is one  
12 that is attended by a broad spectrum of the public,  
13 not necessarily the expert marksmen?

14 MR. GITMAN: I would agree with that.

15 MR. HOLLINGSWORTH: But let's distinguish  
16 attendance and participation.

17 REPRESENTATIVE McNALLY: Well participation.

18 MR. GITMAN: I agree with participation.  
19 Hegins definitely is participated in by the average  
20 shooter. There are a lot of other clubs that will have  
21 the average shooter participate. But let me just say  
22 that, since you asked the question, there are other clubs  
23 and you talk about clubs not being a member of, but there  
24 are other clubs in Pennsylvania that you cannot go in  
25 to shoot pigeons unless you are a member. Unless they know

1 you. We had a testimony earlier by Mr. Bubbenmoyer was it,  
2 that he runs a shoot. I couldn't walk in there. I wouldn't  
3 be let in.

4 REPRESENTATIVE McNALLY: The other aspect,  
5 it appears as though there is a distinction between the  
6 sort of public community event type of pigeon shoot and  
7 those that are, you know, might be more appropriately  
8 described as sporting events. Would you agree with that,  
9 Mr. Hollingsworth?

10 MR. HOLLINGSWORTH: I think the sportiness  
11 of the event is really a function of how birds fly and  
12 how the shooters approach the shoot. Again, I haven't  
13 been to the Hegin's Shoot and I can't speak to that. I  
14 have never seen a shoot that I would describe as being  
15 merely amusing as opposed to a competitive sport. I  
16 do shoot at another club on the same shooting grounds  
17 where there is a restaurant on the grounds and attended  
18 on Sunday morning by a large number of people on their  
19 way to church who stop by there for breakfast. I don't  
20 know where the distinction is.

21 REPRESENTATIVE McNALLY: I will tell you  
22 where the distinction is. Mr. Clemens, in his testimony,  
23 I think described, first of all, you said that the pigeon  
24 shoots you have attended are designed to test one's  
25 shooting skills. On the other hand, Mr. Clemens in his

1 testimony, I think he really was describing the Hegins  
2 Shoot said that the object is to kill as many birds as  
3 possible.

4 MR. HOLLINGSWORTH: Which is a test of  
5 shooting skills.

6 REPRESENTATIVE McNALLY: Well, it depends  
7 on maybe it is a question of whether the glass is half  
8 empty or half full. Going back to the discussion I had  
9 with Mr. Clemens, for example, I offered him the example  
10 of the individual, individuals that are in my district  
11 in the big city in Allegheny County, who breed and train  
12 pit bulls and other dogs for the purpose of killing each  
13 other. And you know, they may make the argument that  
14 the breeding and training of these pit bulls and raising  
15 of them requires a certain degree of skill and expertise  
16 because you have to choose, select certain pit bulls for  
17 breeding, know what to feed them and so on and so forth.  
18 Yet it strikes me that particularly when we are talking  
19 about a wide open public pigeon shoot, particularly the  
20 kind that Mr. Gitman described, the individual, for  
21 example, who is in my district who is interested in  
22 training pit bulls to have fights, I think he is motivated  
23 and the attraction of the spectators and the people who  
24 participate is really blood lust quite frankly. And you  
25 can't deny that that same individual motivated by what I

1 call killing for amusement as opposed to killing for sport,  
2 that that individual would like to participate in a pigeon  
3 shoot because the same attraction and amusement that he  
4 obtains from pit bull fighting, he could find from shooting  
5 pigeons.

6 MR. HOLLINGSWORTH: I would distinguish  
7 what the source of the amusement is, again, as I did over  
8 here. There is no question, when you go to a cock fight  
9 or a pit bull fight as I understand them, because I have  
10 never been to either one, that there is blood lust involved  
11 because it is people simply watching two animals go at  
12 each other and there is no question that is a game of  
13 blood lust. There is no question about that.

14 This is a different issue because there  
15 is no way, in all due respect to Mr. Gitman, there is no  
16 way that anybody has ever found to simulate the use of  
17 inanimate targets, the challenge that is presented by  
18 a live bird.

19 REPRESENTATIVE McNALLY: I am willing to  
20 concede that there are some pigeon shoots --

21 MR. HOLLINGSWORTH. It is not blood lust.  
22 Nobody goes to shoot pigeons just to kill something.

23 REPRESENTATIVE McNALLY: Well, I think you  
24 are making a very broad statement. Now I would be willing  
25 to agree that there are some pigeon shoots in which the

1 participants are interested in testing their skills and  
2 that a pigeon shoot is a unique test of shooting skills.  
3 I am not prepared to agree and the evidence and testimony  
4 we have heard today, as I said, Mr. Clemens said the  
5 object is to kill as many birds as possible in a pigeon  
6 shoot. You can have pigeon shoots, and apparently you  
7 have in Pennsylvania pigeon shoots that exist, if not  
8 solely for the purpose, at least one of the purposes is  
9 it attracts people that like to kill live animals and  
10 they can't do that any other legal way. You know,  
11 it seems to me that we ought to outlaw that. Now how  
12 do we distinguish between the legitimate, the so-called  
13 legitimate pigeon shoots that you participated in and  
14 those in which people are going because they like to  
15 see a bird blasted out of the air? That question may be  
16 problematic. This interest in banning those types of  
17 pigeon shoots, you know, I think is a legitimate interest  
18 one that would be a sound public policy.

19 MR. HOLLINGSWORTH. Let me defend what  
20 Mr. Clemens said. There is just two different ways of  
21 saying we're talking about challenge. It is like going  
22 to a baseball game, you know, playing a baseball game.  
23 The object is to score as many runs as possible. He was  
24 just simply saying with different words the same thing  
25 I am saying.

1 REPRESENTATIVE McNALLY. No, he was not,  
2 no.

3 MR. HOLLINGSWORTH: The object is to kill  
4 as many birds as possible. That is the object because  
5 that is how you win.

6 REPRESENTATIVE McNALLY: If Mr. McHale  
7 were here, we could ask him. His questioning to Mr.  
8 Clemens, as I recall it, was these pigeon shoots are not  
9 sport as hunting is. That they are different skills,  
10 and I think they may have been discussing specifically  
11 the Hegin's Shoot, but the question was, to Mr. Clemens,  
12 there is a distinction between the sport of hunting,  
13 the sport of shooting and these, this type of pigeon  
14 shoot. And Mr. Clemens said, he agreed with that.  
15 He said that this was different. That the object was  
16 to kill as many birds as possible and there is a  
17 distinction.

18 MR. HOLLINGSWORTH: Absolutely. But  
19 I don't think really that is what he meant. When you  
20 go hunting, the object is to kill as many birds as  
21 possible up to the legal limit for some people. Some  
22 people will go out and say I will take two birds -- yes,  
23 it is.

24 REPRESENTATIVE McNALLY. No.

25 MR. HOLLINGSWORTH: The object is to go out

1 and to get the limit. I think we may be moving into an  
2 area of purely semantics here where we are saying,  
3 what I believe Mr Clemens was saying is the object is  
4 to win the contest and the way that you win the contest  
5 is by killing as many birds out of 25 as possible.

6 REPRESENTATIVE McNALLY: I would respectfully  
7 disagree, and the reason I disagree, I am far more  
8 familiar with fishing than with hunting. With fishing,  
9 although you can say that the object is to catch up to  
10 six fish or 12 fish, that is really not the object. The  
11 object is really to find the bait the fish want to eat  
12 or the object is to find the place where the fish are at.  
13 There is a certain degree of competition.

14 MR HOLLINGSWORTH. Sure.

15 REPRESENTATIVE McNALLY: It is a sport  
16 But on the other hand we can, and it appears to be that  
17 this is an amusement. I think Mr. Gitman's testimony  
18 would substantiate that because when he participated, it  
19 is an amusement that people want to kill live animals  
20 and that is killing for amusement.

21 MR. HOLLINGSWORTH: No. I believe I said  
22 at the outset that I don't believe anyone goes to a  
23 pigeon shoot for the purpose of, for the pleasure of  
24 killing. The pleasure is in the competition and in the  
25 display of shotgun skills which cannot be displayed against,



1 there is no more challenging target. And that is my  
2 testimony in the sense. It is not the pleasure of killing.  
3 As I said before, I said the air is, generally at some  
4 of the shoots I have been at is really a respectful air  
5 and something is dying out there and nobody can deny that.  
6 And we are not here, I think, to deny that. But it is  
7 not amusement. I really just take issue with the idea.  
8 Nobody goes to watch in the sense I think for just the  
9 pleasure of seeing birds die. They go to see a display  
10 of shooting skills and people that go to shoot go to  
11 test their shooting skill.

12 REPRESENTATIVE McNALLY: Mr. Gitman, do  
13 you have a --

14 MR. GITMAN: I have been sitting here  
15 patiently and quietly listening to the belief that they  
16 are trying to impose upon us that a pigeon is a more  
17 challenging target than a clay target. I absolutely  
18 refute that statement in any manner. The pigeon is  
19 killed in a ring. The ring is about 50 yards around  
20 away from the shooter. American trap, before we heard  
21 testimony, in American trap this man says that there  
22 were 2,000 competitors in the largest event in Vandalia.  
23 Actually, the 200 bird event is not the largest event  
24 in Vandalia. The Grand American Trapshoot where men stand  
25 and women stand at different yardages. That is the largest

1 event. There are over 4,000 competitors in that individual  
2 competition.

3 In that competition, with all the shooters  
4 participating from all over the country and overseas,  
5 they shoot 100 targets all day long and you might get  
6 one or two individuals to break the whole hundred. There  
7 is a 99 that has won the shoot many times. Now you go  
8 one step further and Jim and you and I have shot sporting  
9 clays. Sporting clays themselves is a hunting situation  
10 where the targets are thrown out. They couldn't be more  
11 challenging. You go into olympic trap or olympic clay  
12 pigeons. You have a target that is thrown for a distance  
13 of 70 to 90 meters, that is almost the length of a  
14 football field, at various angles and distances. In  
15 American trap that same target is only thrown 48 to 52 yards  
16 and of the 4,000 shooters only one or 2 or three that  
17 might have a top score of 98, 99 or 100. In olympic  
18 trap, that target is traveling at a speed of 105 to 120  
19 miles an hour. The speeds vary.

20 Why did they ban the pigeon shoot at the  
21 olympics? That was mentioned earlier. Because it is  
22 not an equal target. The pigeon that flies or the pigeon  
23 that doesn't fly or the pigeon that flies slow is not  
24 an equal test of that man's skill compared to yours or  
25 mine with that same shotgun. But in the olympics they

1 shoot targets that travel at those speeds or those angles  
2 from 72 meters to 90 meters, at varying speeds and angles.  
3 And you don't know the target that comes out of a box  
4 that is governed by a computer and you don't know which  
5 target you are going to get out of three traps that are  
6 in front of you. There is no more challenging shooting  
7 sport than olympic trap.

8 Even conceding that, that everyone cannot  
9 do that and travel across the country or travel  
10 internationally to do that, we can shoot American trap  
11 in this country. It is the most popular shooting sport  
12 and the results of the Grand American Trapshoot will  
13 tell you about the difficulties.

14 As we get older, we realize that we don't  
15 want to see a life taken. We value life. I don't feel  
16 that shooting a pigeon for competition is not an equal  
17 target in the first place for the shooter themselves.  
18 I have no argument with hunting, but taking the life for  
19 a skill and it is not an equal skill, that is what I  
20 was called here to testify. The targets are not equal  
21 and they are not legitimate.

22 ACTING CHAIRMAN BLAUM: If I could just  
23 interrupt for one second, the Committee has to see the  
24 videotape before the equipment is taken back which is  
25 going to happen very soon. If there are not any more

1 questions, we can excuse these two witnesses, watch the  
2 videotape and then have our final witness, Mr. Hodge,  
3 from the Humane Society of the United States.

4 MR. HOLLINGSWORTH: Could I respond just  
5 briefly to Mr. Gitman?

6 ACTING CHAIRMAN BLAUM: Very briefly.

7 MR. HOLLINGSWORTH: Very briefly, in terms  
8 of the measure all over the world having measured targets  
9 that go within certain states and fly in groups as  
10 American trap targets do, let somebody in Tacoma,  
11 Washington and Tampa, Florida mention their target. The  
12 pigeon shoot, as at a sporting clay shoot, you are shooting  
13 the same day. It is the targets of that particular day  
14 and it is each individual bird and there is no way to  
15 get from a clay target the type of challenge that you  
16 get from a bird that bobs, weaves, turns and flies towards  
17 you or flies away. The targets are different and it is  
18 for that reason that they measure instinctive fine shotgun  
19 skill which is a different skill than the repetitive  
20 skill of shooting American trap or skeet. Without getting  
21 into the merits of the game. I just want to respond to that.

22 ACTING CHAIRMAN BLAUM: Mr. Hollingsworth  
23 and Mr. Gitman, thank you very much.

24 REPRESENTATIVE PICCOLA: Mr. Chairman,  
25 I think this discussion is a non-issue. There are many

1 in the House who believe that golf is a sport. I happen  
2 to think that it is nothing of the sort. But it is a  
3 legitimate difference of opinion and I think these  
4 gentlemen have a difference of opinion.

5 I would like to make a request on the  
6 videotape, Mr. Chairman, that Mr. Clemens and anyone  
7 else be invited up to look at the tape and also be  
8 permitted to comment on the tape if they feel that there  
9 is anything that is not accurate or needs explanation.

10 ACTING CHAIRMAN BLAUM: If anybody would  
11 like to come up behind the Committee, I assume these  
12 platforms --

13 (Laughter.)

14 (Presentation of videotape.)

15 ACTING CHAIRMAN BLAUM. Mr. Guy Hodge,  
16 Humane Society of the United States.

17 MR. HODGE: Mr. Chairman, my name is Guy  
18 Hodge. I am the Director of Data and Information for  
19 the Humane Society of the United States which is a national  
20 animal welfare organization headquartered in Washington,  
21 D.C. with a constituency of approximately 900,000 persons  
22 including 52,000 residents of Pennsylvania. I myself,  
23 am a native of the Keystone State.

24 The Humane Society of the United States,  
25 over a period of approximately the last ten years, has

1 conducted an extensive investigation of live pigeon shoots,  
2 which I have tried to detail in my testimony, and I am  
3 going to abbreviate that in part. I almost hesitate to  
4 say this because I have something of a special expertise  
5 in the area of urban pigeon control, and I think I can  
6 clarify some of the questions and disputes that have  
7 arisen before. Pigeon shooting is a relic from our not  
8 so distant past. The earliest live pigeon shoots dates  
9 to approximately the 1880s, about the time repeating  
10 shotguns were developed. The first flyer shoots of  
11 such event, as sometimes called by participants, were  
12 held in Europe, Asia and Africa. Flyer shoots evolved  
13 into modern trap and skeet shooting but the use of live  
14 pigeons rather than clay ones remain popular in particular  
15 in Spain, Italy and Mexico. There is no record of the  
16 first pigeon shoot held in the United States although  
17 the practice obviously dates at least to 1934, and  
18 according to Sports Illustrated Magazine flyer shoots  
19 faded from popularity but the sport was rediscovered in  
20 the 1950s by Texans on a hunting trip in Mexico.

21 Pigeon shooting still has an ardent regional  
22 following, particularly in the southern and southwestern  
23 parts of the United States. In the early 1960s, an  
24 organization was formed, the TAPA, to meet a growing  
25 demand for organized shoots. That organization is based

1 in Texas and has a membership claimed to be approximately  
2 600 shooters.

3           Flyer shoots apparently owe some of their  
4 modern day popularity to the cash prizes now offered by  
5 sponsors. At the Coleman Memorial, the champion can  
6 collect more than \$2,000 in prize money. In some shoots  
7 such as that sponsored by the Loreda, Texas Country Club  
8 participants play a complicated betting game with stakes  
9 reportedly as high as \$35,000.

10           The Fred Coleman Memorial is one of the  
11 few live bird shoots in the U.S. held in public view.  
12 Most shoots are held at private gun clubs, fields and  
13 ranches. Admission is often by invitation only and  
14 participants are as secretive about their activities as  
15 cock fighters. It is with good reason that participants  
16 keep a low profile. Most state anti-cruelty statutes  
17 implicitly prohibit pigeon shoots. In approximately  
18 15 states the activity is expressly banned by law.  
19 Opposition to live pigeon shoots has been building over  
20 the last few years. No state has fully escaped the legal  
21 and ethical and social questions that have arisen as the  
22 American people re-examine the way we treat animals.  
23 More than anything the controversy demonstrates how,  
24 as a nation's values evolve, there are often painful  
25 collisions between the public conscience and deep-rooted

1 traditions. In most jurisdictions the issue has been  
2 resolved in favor of the pigeons. The most recent state  
3 to render a decision against pigeon shoots was, as you  
4 heard, Nevada, where three years ago in a formal legal  
5 opinion the Attorney General ruled that the practice of  
6 using live pigeons in a shooting contest was a violation  
7 of the state anti-cruelty laws.

8           Some people wonder why Pennsylvania stands  
9 alone among northern states as a place where gunners can,  
10 with impunity, shoot pigeons. But there is an open  
11 question as to whether live pigeon shoots were intended  
12 to be a lawful activity in this state. In Pennsylvania  
13 pigeons are caught in a legal limbo. The Keystone State  
14 is one of only 14 states that do not define the types  
15 of animals to which their anti-cruelty statutes apply.  
16 The vague wording of the current Pennsylvania statutes  
17 can blur the distinction between lawful and the illegal  
18 activities.

19           One of the most troubling aspects at  
20 the shoot at Hegin Park involves the lack of care provided  
21 to the birds in the day preceding the Labor Day event.  
22 At Hegin, the holiday pageantry is actually a four-day  
23 marathon of pigeon shoots, which begin on Friday at the  
24 Valley View Gun Club. We fear that some of the birds  
25 may have spent as long as five days inside trucks not



1 counting their hours in transit. Officials from animal  
2 protection organizations, including observers from the  
3 Humane Society of the United States, have repeatedly  
4 observed birds crammed in wooden and plastic crates which  
5 were stacked from floor to ceiling inside of some of the  
6 unventilated trucks. The crates apparently remained  
7 untended in the trucks until they were carried to the  
8 firing line. There the trapper boys often were seen  
9 removing dead and dying birds and tossing them aside.  
10 Presumably, those animals perished from starvation,  
11 dehydration or suffocation.

12 Violation or potential violations of law  
13 may also occur during the acquisition in transportation  
14 of pigeons for the shoot. The pigeons are purchased  
15 from contractors who raise or collect them and I might  
16 clarify that much of what has been said by humane groups  
17 in the past about the birds being captively reared for  
18 pigeon shooting, they have made those statements because  
19 they have read that in newspapers where spokesmen for  
20 the Hegins Shoot had said that they acquired their birds  
21 from breeders who specifically breed them. And I can  
22 submit those articles for the Committee if they would like  
23 to see them. Most of the birds we do believe are actually  
24 imported from urban areas where some of those communities  
25 have ordinances prohibiting commerce and live pigeons for

1 the purpose of pigeon shoots. I, myself, reside presently  
2 in Virginia, which is a state that has a statute specifically  
3 prohibiting the practice of collecting or transporting  
4 pigeons for use in live animal shoots. Yet we have seen  
5 in northern Virginia classified advertisements in local  
6 newspapers, and those advertisements suggest to us that  
7 birds are being collected in the Old Dominion and possibly  
8 trucked to Hegins for their pigeon shoot.

9 We have heard today about defendants of  
10 the shoot asserting their individual rights. What about  
11 the rights, let me pose a question, what about the rights  
12 of those residents, such as myself in Virginia, in a state  
13 where we have spoken as to our views on pigeon shooting  
14 having pigeons being exported from our state to be used  
15 at pigeon shoots. I would think that we too have a  
16 vested interest. Many practical difficulties remain  
17 in defining and enforcing Pennsylvania anti-cruelty  
18 statutes. There has been no real clear ruling from the  
19 courts on this subject.

20 Now opponents of House Bill 696 have  
21 contended that live birds provide a unique test of  
22 marksmanship that cannot be duplicated with clay targets.  
23 But many of the birds in 1985, when I witnessed the shoot  
24 did not take flight as the release box is opened. And  
25 I cannot be certain whether these animals were simply

1 confused, whether they were captively reared animals  
2 or the animals perhaps were just too weak from hunger and  
3 dehydration to take flight. In any case, it takes no  
4 particular talent with a gun to shoot at a confused and  
5 frightened bird that is still standing on the ground.

6 We have also heard that groups, such as  
7 the Humane Society of the United States, actually have  
8 a hidden agenda behind the protest at the Fred Coleman  
9 Memorial. You have been told that the bill was some sort  
10 of diabolical plot to take the guns out of the hands of  
11 hunters. But we have no secret mission. Nowhere else  
12 in the United States where laws have already been enacted  
13 against pigeon shoots has that legislation been used to  
14 mount an assault upon any other form of hunting. The  
15 Humane Society of the United States views this bill simply  
16 as a choice between compassion and animals suffering.

17 We have also heard that pigeon shoots are  
18 in reality a humanitarian endeavor. They claim to provide  
19 a public service in eliminating disease carrying birds  
20 from city streets where they are urbane to urban residents.  
21 And considering such an activity, it is important to  
22 distinguish between explanations and excuses. Pigeons  
23 are not the public health threat that the previous witnesses  
24 would have you believe. They actually suffer from an  
25 unfounded representation as a pest. They do have a somewhat

1 beneficial role in the urban environment since they  
2 scavenge city streets for garbage that would otherwise  
3 attract rats.. Moreover, most of the diseases attributed  
4 to pigeons are so common in nature, so rare in humans  
5 or so mild in their symptoms that the control of birds  
6 is pointless. There is actual little evidence linking  
7 pigeons to disease infections in humans. What they have  
8 established in a clinical environment is that when you  
9 expose birds to certain diseases in a clinical setting,  
10 they do become infected with the disease. That does not  
11 mean that they pose a public health hazard. In fact,  
12 when they talk about pigeons having approximately 30  
13 diseases, which can be transmitted to man, meaning they  
14 are epizootic diseases, humans can transmit approximately  
15 50 or 60 diseases between each other. Point of fact,  
16 for most of those diseases, poultry, livestock and even  
17 dogs and cats, according to the Center for Disease Control  
18 records, are more a common source of many of these  
19 infectious diseases. For example, bird species, including  
20 pigeons, in theory can contract rabies, but there has  
21 never in history been a single case of a human contracting  
22 rabies from a pigeon. In fact, the only disease of any  
23 real substantial significance is an ailment called  
24 histoplasmosis. It is a fungal disease. The birds do  
25 not actually carry the disease. It occurs naturally in

1 the soil. Their droppings provide a medium for the growth  
2 of the fungus and its transmission into the air. Because  
3 it occurs in the soil, in a city environment, it is only  
4 going to be a problem if in fact, first of all, the fungus  
5 occurs naturally in that city soil and if the bird droppings  
6 are accumulated on the soil rather than on the sidewalk.  
7 Moreover, because fresh pigeon droppings are so highly  
8 acidic, the fungus cannot grow where pigeons are actively  
9 roosting. It can only grow at a site where the pigeons  
10 have previously roosted and have abandoned the site for  
11 a minimum period of three years and then, under dry  
12 conditions, that soil must be disturbed for the spores  
13 to become airborne and inhaled by humans.

14           Nationwide, throughout recorded history  
15 going back to about the 1930s, there have only been about  
16 250,000 cases of histoplasmosis in the United States in  
17 humans and most of those cases have been associated  
18 with poultry farms, secondly with roosts of starlings  
19 and blackbirds, and only in a very few minor incidents  
20 with pigeons.

21           Live animal trapping moreover is an  
22 inefficient method of managing pigeons in the urban  
23 environment. It really has no effect on reducing pigeon  
24 population. Since the pigeon is such a prolific breeder,  
25 the relatively small number of birds removed with traps

1 has little effect on the flock. What you do by creating  
2 more favorable conditions for the animal, since there is  
3 less competition for available harborage, food, water  
4 and shelter, those birds that survive tend to be healthier.  
5 Being healthier they tend to have a greater success rate  
6 at reproducing and they very quickly compensate for the  
7 birds that are removed. Typically in as little as four  
8 months when you start a removal program, the population  
9 is restored to its natural level, which is the carrying  
10 capacity. The only thing that determines the number of  
11 pigeons in a city setting is the amount of food and shelter  
12 available to them.

13 We have also been told that the birds  
14 killed in Hegins give their lives in the name of civic  
15 charity. But neither the long history of the event  
16 nor its profitability makes the killing any more acceptable.  
17 Elsewhere in the state gun clubs holding live pigeon  
18 shoots do not pretend to such noble aims. None of these  
19 purported benefits, whether real or imagined are worth  
20 the terrible cost in animal suffering.

21 Now the HSUS does not doubt that the Labor  
22 Day event in Hegins is the social highlight of the year.  
23 But surely we think the township can find a cause for  
24 celebration other than killing pigeons. Now the town  
25 officials may be hard pressed to find another diversion,

1 which will attract such a large crowd and entice people  
2 to travel to the Schuylkill Valley from all over North  
3 and South America. But if the holiday festival in Hegins  
4 cannot endure without the slaughter of pigeons, it  
5 would be a sad commentary on the values of the visitors  
6 who attend the Fred Coleman Memorial.

7           It is not our intention to judge the people  
8 of Hegins. Their Labor Day celebration is a fine tradition.  
9 But Pennsylvania's tolerance towards this pastime has  
10 done fundamental damage to the nation's confidence in  
11 animal protection laws. The passage of House Bill No 696  
12 is an essential step if we are to even handedly apply  
13 the doctrine of the humane treatment of animals. The  
14 passage of this bill would continue the state's long-  
15 standing commitment to the humane treatment of animals.  
16 It affirms that cruelty to animals has no place in  
17 Pennsylvania no matter how longstanding a tradition or  
18 profitable the enterprise. For these reasons, the  
19 Humane Society of the United States enthusiastically  
20 supports the passage of H.B. No. 696 and we would urge  
21 this Committee, with all possible dispatch, to report  
22 the bill out to the full House for consideration. Thank  
23 you.

24           (Applause.)

25           ACTING CHAIRMAN BLAUM: Thank you, Mr. Hodge.

1 Are there any questions? Representative Piccola.

2 BY REPRESENTATIVE PICCOLA:

3 Q Mr. Hodge, I guess, I am not sure from your  
4 testimony whether I can clear up the controversy that has  
5 been in my mind from this hearing is where do these pigeons  
6 come from? I assume you have been here today.

7 A Yes.

8 Q And you have heard testimony from those  
9 who are involved in these shoots, both in Heginns and  
10 elsewhere, that they are simply not bred for the purpose  
11 of being used in the shoot. Yet, we have this so-called  
12 fact sheet here. Now you are somewhat equivocal, I think,  
13 in your testimony and indicated that this fact sheet  
14 apparently came from newspaper articles?

15 A Well, I can't speak to the source of that  
16 fact sheet. It is not from my organization.

17 Q Yes, I understand that.

18 A But what I do know is I think, well, I  
19 have seen comments by spokespersons for the Fred  
20 Coleman Memorial in which they have stated to the  
21 press that the animals were being purposely bred.  
22 I think those statements were in error at least in part.  
23 I do think many, if not a majority, if not all of the birds,  
24 at least to my knowledge, are gathered in the urban  
25 environment and trucked to the community for the shooting



1 and I think that is typical of most pigeon shoots conducted  
2 in the United States.

3 Q So then it would be your opinion that this  
4 statement in this fact sheet is not in fact accurate?

5 A It was probably accurate as it was represented  
6 to the people who wrote up that sheet. I think they  
7 were reporting the information presented to them. But  
8 you are correct, I think most of the birds do quite simply  
9 come from the urban environment.

10 Q I am not suggesting they deliberately lied.  
11 Don't get me wrong. I would agree with you that their  
12 source, namely, newspaper article is probably less than  
13 the best source to take knowing what gets printed in  
14 newspapers. Now you had characterized yourself as an  
15 expert of some sort in, you sounded like one too with  
16 your testimony, pigeons and urban settings.

17 A In my capacity with the Humane Society of  
18 the United States, for the last 18 years, one of the  
19 functions I have had is to provide a free consultation  
20 service to municipal governments to assist them in  
21 designing urban pigeon control and urban wildlife damage  
22 control programs. I am a naturalist by training. Have  
23 functioned as an adjunct professor of biology at Northern  
24 Virginia Community College, and as a matter of fact,  
25 I came here not from Washington, D.C. but from Lexington,

1 Kentucky where I am in the process of designing a pigeon  
2 control plan for that community.

3 Q And what do those pigeon control projects  
4 involve?

5 A Well, principally because the number of  
6 pigeons in the community is determined by the availability of  
7 food and harborage, the focus that we are now recommending  
8 to cities and the cities are turning to is to reduce  
9 the amount of harborage in the community through improved  
10 sanitation and through the erection of structural  
11 barriers which physically exclude the birds from places  
12 where they might otherwise perch a roost. And by reducing  
13 the amount of habitat available, you will get a natural  
14 suppression of the number of birds within the community.

15 Q That system, notwithstanding though, I  
16 imagine many municipalities simply trap them and do what  
17 with them?

18 A Well typically, unless you get in a small  
19 town, most municipalities do not take an active role  
20 in pigeon control. They will provide advice to the  
21 residents if it is requested. But it is viewed, the  
22 pigeon problem is actually viewed as a matter of  
23 perception. There are people who love to have the birds  
24 on their property and a neighbor may very much dislike  
25 having the birds. So most cities simply say it is up to

1 that individual to deal with the problem. The individual  
2 contracts with a commercial pest control company for  
3 pigeon control services.

4 Q Is that where these trapped pigeons come  
5 from?

6 A I can only offer you a presumption, and  
7 I presume that many of the pest control companies which  
8 do live trap birds are in fact doubling their income,  
9 so to speak, by not only charging the property owner  
10 from whose premises they remove the birds but by then  
11 in turn selling them.

12 Q You perhaps don't know the answer to this  
13 question since you are now a resident of Virginia I believe.  
14 And you indicated Virginia has a law outlawing the  
15 transporting of pigeons for the purpose of live shoots.

16 A It outlaws every aspect, collection,  
17 participation, transport.

18 Q Do you know of any Pennsylvania community,  
19 city, township, borough that has such an ordinance?

20 A I had heard, I received a report from  
21 Mr. Eric Hendricks of the Pennsylvania SPCA, that the  
22 City of Philadelphia has such an ordinance but I do not  
23 have a copy of that ordinance and I have not seen it.

24 REPRESENTATIVE PICCOLA: Thank you.

25 ACTING CHAIRMAN BLAUM: Representative

1 McNally.

2 REPRESENTATIVE McNALLY: I have just one  
3 brief question that I want to direct to Mr. Hollingsworth  
4 if he won't mind. Having viewed this videotape of the  
5 Hegin's Pigeon Shoot would you say that that is a fair  
6 test of your shooting skill, that it would be?

7 MR. HOLLINGSWORTH: Not really. What I  
8 believe they did is that one bird out of 50 or 75  
9 eventually shown on the ground, I haven't seen, you see  
10 that in isolated incidents. But there we saw it  
11 repeated. Some of the birds shot in the air were fairly  
12 typical box birds. I have shot a lot faster and a lot  
13 stronger. Short answer is no.

14 ACTING CHAIRMAN BLAUM: Any other questions?

15 (No response.)

16 I would like to thank everyone that came  
17 today and all our witnesses and people in attendance for  
18 coming to this Judiciary Committee hearing on this piece  
19 of legislation. The Judiciary Committee will now take  
20 this legislation under advisement and make a decision.  
21 Thank you very much.

22 (Whereupon at 1:50 p.m. the hearing  
23 was adjourned.)

24

25

1 I hereby certify that the proceedings and  
2 evidence taken by me in the within matter are fully and  
3 accurately indicated in my notes and that this is a true  
4 and correct transcript of the same.

5 Dorothy M. Malone  
6 Dorothy M. Malone  
7 Registered Professional Reporter  
8 135 S. Landis Street  
9 Hummelstown, PA 17036

10 The foregoing certification of this  
11 transcript does not apply to any reproduction of the same  
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13 supervision of the certifying reporter.

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COMMITTEES

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL AFFAIRS  
PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HARRISBURG

May 22, 1989

The Honorable Thomas R. Caltagirone  
House Post Office Box 209  
Room 214, South Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0028

Dear Mr. Chairman:

"This letter is in regard to House Bill 696 (banning pigeon shoots in Pennsylvania). We would like to advise you that the members of the House of Representatives that have signed this letter strongly oppose the passage of this bill.

"It is our belief that the Hegins Pigeon Shoot, in Schuylkill County, held on an annual basis on Labor Day is a local community function that raises needed charitable funds used for the maintenance of local recreational facilities.

"We feel that this is not a State issue but should be decided by individual communities on a local basis. Our constituents by a large majority, favor this activity and we believe that the passage of this bill would violate the rights of our local citizens' freedom of choice.

"Thank you very much for consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

*Bob Allen 125 district*  
*Paul C. Roze 86th District*  
*G. J. Jump 123rd Dist*  
*Paul Steiner 109th*  
*Keith L. McCall 123rd*  
*Don Angelo 124th*  
*Mark Phillips 105th*  
*John L. L. 104th*  
*Paul & Marco 105th*



**NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA**  
INCORPORATED 1871

1600 RHODE ISLAND AVENUE, N.W.  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20036

**ALAN S. KRUG**  
NRA FIELD REPRESENTATIVE  
PA

315 SOUTH ALLEN STREET  
#228  
STATE COLLEGE, PA 16801  
814 234 2222

May 24, 1969  
File: 5.1.1

“ Dear Representative:

“ It has come to my attention that claims have been made that the NRA in some way supports H.B. 698, proposed legislation that would ban live bird (pigeon) shooting in the Commonwealth. This is not the case -- the NRA has always been opposed to this legislation and remains opposed to it today.

“ The NRA will continue to oppose this legislation even if it is amended to limit the ban to the Hegins Pigeon Shoot or any other pigeon shoot.

“ Live pigeon shooting is a traditional, international shooting sport. It has many adherents worldwide. Although the NRA has no programs of this type, it does not object to them.

“ Passage of this legislation, however it might be amended to limit the various objections currently extant, would constitute a dangerous precedent that could lead to anti-hunting legislation in the future.

“ NRA's position on the issue of live pigeon shooting remains the same as always. Should you have any questions or wish to discuss the matter with me in more detail, please do not hesitate to give me a call.

“ Thank you.”

Sincerely,

  
Alan S. Krug

ASK/mpk

905 East Main Street  
P.O. Box 437  
Hegins, PA 17938  
May 24, 1989

Honorable Thomas R. Caltagirone  
PA House of Representatives  
House Post Office  
Main Capital Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-0028

1<sup>1</sup> Honorable Thomas R. Caltagirone:

1<sup>1</sup> Since 1934 the Labor Day Shoot has been very special for many people of the Hegins Area. This event has been beneficial in that it has provided a facility that is used by many organizations and families throughout this community. Other towns and cities spend tens of thousands of tax dollars to provide a recreational facility such as the Hegins Park. Tax dollars do not support the Hegins Park.

1<sup>1</sup> The main objective of the Labor Day event, I believe this to be true, was and is to provide an activity for sportsmen who by choice want to compete with other sportsmen. Since these sportsmen, who love this sport, have supported our Labor Day for the past 54 years we would like to and feel obligated to continue this shoot for them. In many cases father and sons and brothers spend time together at something they like and want to do. This shoot has gone on without police protection and has not caused any trouble for our community or any other people for the first 50+ years. There has never been any injuries to anyone all these years. Only in the past three or four years some people from out of the area have succeeded in drawing national attention along with demanding police protection costing tax payers many tax dollars. These protestors came to Hegins trying to disrupt and criticize a local peaceful event. The sportsmen and local towns people stood by and watched and took their abuse. We were not breaking any law.

1<sup>1</sup> Probably the most rewarding of all is that the people of this community have learned to work together donating much time for a common cause. Young men, and in the past few years some girls, get paid for setting the traps. This has taught these young people the reward for working and the value of money and that shooting is serious and dangerous. These young boys and girls, contrary to what the protestors want to have you believe grow up to be hard working, professional and business people. I would challenge anyone to go to the large employers outside this community and ask them how they like the employees from the Hegins Valley and how they compare them to other employees.

1<sup>1</sup> The 200 volunteers who donate their time each year strongly disagree with the proposed H.B. 696 and its potential interference with their rights. Also the rights of sportsmen who enjoyed this sport for hundreds of years. //

Very truly yours,

Bob Tobash  
Member Hegins Park Assn. &  
Labor Day Committee



120 Retreat Ave  
46ford, CT 06106  
Sept 4 1986

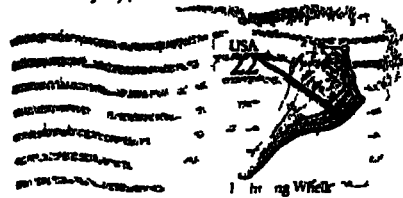
A letter to the people of Hegens

It is the way of life that you have always known, here among the beautiful mountains and valleys of Pennsylvania. It is the teaching of your forefathers, - the teaching you first heard when you were very young, as young, in a way, as the very young birds who were stopped in their flight or kept from flight by gunshot, on Labor Day

But animals feel pain Birds feel pain Every living creature with a nervous system feels pain

Enclosed is a small donation May it be used for the maintenance of your parks, and serve at least as a little apology for whatever unkindness we showed you, on Labor Day

Martha Fitzgerald



Clint W. Fitzgerald  
Assistant Editor  
The Hegens Standard  
Valley View Pennsylvania

## Letters to the editor

### Help avert disaster

To the editor:

In a few weeks, the Pennsylvania legislature will recess for the summer months and will not reconvene until two weeks after Labor Day — two weeks after an event which, for many Pennsylvanians, represents the worst of what our state has to offer: the annual massacre in Hegins (Schuylkill County) of 7,000 to 9,000 birds in the name of fund raising and "sport."

The Coleman Memorial Shoot is not the only live bird shoot in Pennsylvania, but it is, by the organizer's own boast, the world's largest. It also involves the highly objectionable practice of hiring children to kill the wounded birds.

In spite of nationwide publicity and outrage, hundreds of letters to

the governor and Pennsylvania legislators, editorial outcries by a dozen newspapers, and strong support among many Pennsylvania Representatives, HB 455 is still stalled in the Judiciary Committee chaired by Rep. William De Weese, who evidently has no intention of releasing the bill onto the House floor for a vote.

If the legislature fails to act on this bill within the next few weeks, it is safe to say that the bloodbath in Hegins will be repeated for the 54th time — and thus time around it may include harm to humans as well, if another explosive confrontation occurs in Hegins.

It is still not too late to avert a disaster. Contact the governor and your own representative, asking them to support the bill, and Rep. William De Weese, asking him to release the bill from committee

before the legislature recesses at the end of June. For information on the issue, contact: Trans-Species Unlimited, P.O. Box 1563, Williamsport, Pa. 17703.

Dr. George P. Cave, President  
Trans-Species Unlimited

### Sincere thanks

To the editor:

I wish to express my sincere thanks and appreciation for your cooperation and the publicity you gave our open house held June 10.

Approximately 700 to 800 people visited our office. There were many favorable comments.

Thanks again for your support in helping make our open house a success.

Morris F. Good  
Postmaster  
Williamsport

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 ppi on for the forms to be  
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 1 renewal applications for re-  
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 ent spokeswoman said Wed-  
 y. Fifty-seven percent of  
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 ade officials say that Reagan's  
 import program is working —  
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scrupulous haulers on vacant lots in crowded city neighborhoods. He acknowledged that the letter was confusing.

Steiner explained that state regulations allow the authority to accept trash from medical facilities if

ones who wouldn't. We couldn't see us fighting it. We wanted to get the monkey off our back." Spannuth told Brightbill the members had decided to let the doctors and hospitals take up the fight. "Frank can't take all the  
 (Continued on page 2)

# Animal Rights Group Claims It Took Traps

By JOSEPH KOSACK  
 Staff Writer

HEGINS — An animal rights activist group known as the Animal Liberation Front has acknowledged responsibility for stealing pigeon traps from Hegins Park in an attempt to halt the annual Fred Coleman Memorial Shoot on Labor Day.

Jill Maurer, a member of the Lehigh Valley Animal Rights Coalition, reported Tuesday morning that a spokesman for ALF, identified only as "Ben" asked her to relay a message to media acknowledging his group's responsibility for taking 26 collapsible pigeon traps and spraying graffiti on park equipment.

Maurer said that the AFL decided to take action to put an end to the pigeon shoot after authorities refused to halt what is considered the largest single-day, live-bird shoot anywhere.

She said the AFL had appealed to the Schuylkill County Court but had been "laughed out of court."

With no legal means to thwart the Coleman Shoot, she said ALF members decided to raid the grounds and

release the pigeons. When they were unable to find the birds, she said, they opted to gather as many pigeon traps as possible in an effort to halt the shoot.

It went on as scheduled, however. "We cannot understand why live pigeons are used when clay pigeons can be used," Maurer said. "The pigeons are shot, then kids twist their heads off or stomp them into the ground."

Herman Coleman, Hegins, secretary for the Labor Day shoot, said in an earlier interview that if the birds weren't shot in the park, they'd probably be poisoned because they are a nuisance.

"I don't argue with those that are opposed to the shoot — they have a right to," said Coleman. "But I don't know what other purpose pigeons have in this world."

"We don't force anybody to watch the shoot, nor do we pay any shooters to come," said Coleman. "This is an area where there has always been a lot of pigeon shoots. They've existed  
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# Claims It Took Traps

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since before I was born, and people still tolerate them in this area."

According to Ed Hauck in an interview before the shoot, the 52-year-old event draws 5,000 to 7,000 spectators, who gather to enjoy a homecoming-like atmosphere and watch more than 250 shooters, some of who come as from as far away as Great Britain.

"This park was built entirely from funds generated from the shoot; not one dollar of taxpayer's money was ever used in the construction or maintenance of the park," Hauck said. "Over the years, over a quarter of a million dollars has been raised for this park from the shoot."

Maurer, however, found the park and its appearance less than desirable.

"The park is a slum, for crying out loud," she said. "I'm sure a lot of it (the money raised) is pocketed."

Their action in Hegins is not the first time the ALF has left its mark on private property, Hauck said. In May 1984 five members stole videotapes of experiments with apes from the laboratory of Dr. Thomas A. Genarelli, clinical head of the injury center at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia and disrupted ongoing experiments, reports stated.

The stolen videotapes were shown to organizations throughout the country, including a public showing in the Art and Ethnic Center in Pottsville.

Melvin Stutzman, police chief of

Hegins Township, said Tuesday that no charges have been yet been filed, but that an investigation is continuing. He said he thought it unfair that recreational equipment used by children should be used for ALF's statements. "Stop the slaughter now. ALF" was sprayed on a scoreboard and "ALF" painted on a basketball court backboard, he said.

Maurer said "Ben" told her he and the others involved could not release their identities because they are being pursued by the District Attorney of Philadelphia for acts they perpetrated at a research center there. "They're underground," Maurer said, noting that those who conducted the raid are from throughout Pennsylvania and surrounding states.

"I hope they don't think of doing it next year," Maurer said of the shoot, "because I don't know what the AFL will do. But I do know they won't stand for it."

Hauck said that about 5,000 pigeons are used in the shoot, the number depending on how many shooters show up. The birds are bought from contractors who raise or collect them. Most of the dead pigeons are used for fertilizer, he said, although some people take them home for food.

Ted Godshall, a spokesman for the Pennsylvania Game Commission, said the killing of pigeons is legal because they are classified as domestic birds rather than song or game birds.



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