

# SB 380/HB2295

Crossbow Opposition Testimony  
By  
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**Testimony:** I have heard numerous reasons for the sudden desire to allow crossbows during the regular archery season, from population control, to hunter recruitment and retention, to economic gains for the crossbow industry. I am not sure which, if any, of these are indeed true. What I do know is that none of these reasons are beneficial to the whitetail or for future hunters (kids)... both of which are our state's most precious resources.

I am not going to argue one way or the other if the crossbow industry is pushing for these bills to be passed. If one does a little research it is obvious that the crossbow industry is lobbying hard in the state of Kansas. Other than the crossbow industries total disregard for bow hunters and sound wildlife management, I personally have no issue with the crossbow itself. As a matter of fact if crossbows were allowed during any other time of the year or given their own season, other than archery season, I believe this would be a non-issue. That is not the issue here. These bills will allow crossbows into the general archery season so I am going to focus on what I believe are negatives for allowing crossbows during that time.

I will partially agree that the state of Kansas has an overabundance of deer, but only in certain parts of the state. To make a blanket statement that Kansas as a whole is overpopulated with deer would be an unhealthy account of our deer numbers from a Wildlife Management standpoint. Any wildlife biologist will tell you that in order to control a population you must focus on the female species. Either through limiting the number of young they produce or through eliminating a portion of the females. With a wild animal, such as the whitetail, the only feasible means is to eliminate more does. This cannot be accomplished by simply allowing crossbows during the general archery season. Most hunters, resident or not, are out to shoot a mature buck, which Kansas is well known for. Although I do try to fill all my doe tags every year, I myself can fall into that same category. I love the challenge of hunting mature, elusive bucks and I believe it's reasonable to say that is what most hunters intend to kill. From my own experience when talking with hunters, rifle hunters included, most will kill one buck and be done...this will be the same for crossbow hunters. They will not be seeking to kill does. If SB380 or HB2295 pass all we have done is more than doubled the number of deer hunters during the general archery season, most of which, already rifle hunt. So you haven't increased the total number of hunters... just the amount during archery season, which will equate to little change in the number of deer killed every year.

There is no easy or popular answer to reducing the deer herd as drastically as some might suggest. In order to do this effectively, you must provide hunters with incentives to shoot more does. Through combination doe/buck tags or through some sort of "Earn-a-Buck" tag system in the state of Kansas. Unique only to us... Possibly allow each resident hunter a buck tag and then giving them a quota of doe tags that they must pay for and fill and they will earn a FREE "Bonus" Buck Tag. The does that they harvest could then be donated to Food Programs across the country. I could see deer numbers drastically reduced to a desirable amount within a few short years and at the same time feed thousands of people. Again, this should only be done in certain areas of the state, only during certain years, and only after consulting several Wildlife Biologists to pinpoint the areas, if any, that need to have a significant reduction in

deer numbers. Kansas should not be a cookie cutter state when it comes to Wildlife Management... we can separate ourselves from the crowd.

It's also important to look past the time when the population of the deer will come down as well. If crossbows are allowed, it will be nearly impossible to get rid of them. The language of SB380 states that crossbows will be allowed during the archery season. That means for the life of hunting, crossbows will be the choice of hunters during what used to be called archery season. If allowed they will never be removed from archery season.

My next issue with these bills involves hunter access. As I stated earlier I am a farmer and I am fortunate enough to own enough land that I can comfortably hunt on. However, I know of several bow hunters that are not as fortunate. They cannot afford to own land or lease it and with the high demand for hunting properties there are few pieces of private land left for these individuals. They are left with the opportunities that Public Hunting Land provides them. If we are to allow crossbows during the general archery season it has been estimated by Lloyd Fox, Big Game Coordinator for KDWPT, that it could eventually double (that's a conservative number) the amount of hunters during the archery season. To have a quality hunt it's imperative that hunters are not stacked on top of each other. This in itself could diminish the quality of the hunt considerably and Kansas will no longer be revered as one of the nations leading Trophy Whitetail States.

Considering hunter retention and recruitment: According to the North American Bowhunting Coalition, any hunter recruitment or retention created from crossbows is often short-lived due to it's easy nature. Being in education I see what society is becoming through our kids. Everything is becoming easier... from cooking food, to locating information, even to answering a phone. Some day there will be a button for everything... if we are not all ready there. I believe by continually making things easier in life we are actually destroying the integrity of work that the generations before us ground out with their bare hands. I do not want my son to grow up in a society of "Easy Buttons". "Easy Buttons", do not make a man. Only character forged from failures and successes can make a man.

It's nearly impossible to talk about the sanctity of archery season because, much like the sanctity of life or marriage, it simply cannot accurately be expressed with words. However, in an attempt to express this passion I would like to share with you one of my favorite quotes by English poet and writer Leigh Hunt, "There are two worlds: the world that we can measure with line and rule, and the world that we feel with our hearts and imagination." These bills are measured with line and rule, there is no sound wildlife management being practice here, and the only people to benefit will be crossbow manufactures. True bow hunting comes from the heart it takes practice, skill, patience, and persistence. It's something that does not come easy, there is no "Easy Button" when it comes to archery, it builds character and that is something we should want to pass onto the next generation.