

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 2372

As Passed Legislature

Title: An act relating to providing a mechanism to encourage volunteers to teach hunter education programs in Washington.

Brief Description: Encouraging volunteers to teach hunter education courses.

Sponsors: By House Committee on Natural Resources, Ecology & Parks (originally sponsored by Representatives Cox, Buri, Williams, Blake, Moeller, Buck, Conway, Sump, P. Sullivan, Springer, Haler, Ericks, Kretz, Simpson, Dunn and Ormsby).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources, Ecology & Parks: 1/10/06, 1/24/06 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/9/06, 98-0.

Passed Senate: 2/28/06, 45-0.

Passed Legislature.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Directs the Department of Fish and Wildlife to create non-monetary incentives to encourage more individuals to volunteer their time as hunter education instructors.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, ECOLOGY & PARKS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 11 members: Representatives B. Sullivan, Chair; Upthegrove, Vice Chair; Buck, Ranking Minority Member; Kretz, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Blake, Chandler, Dickerson, Eickmeyer, Hunt, Kagi and Orcutt.

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (Department) is responsible for the operation of a statewide hunter education program. This program, or an equivalent program in another state, must be completed by applicants age 34 or younger for a state hunting license.

The hunter education program consists of at least 10 hours of instruction in safety, conservation, sportsmanship, and firearm handling. Average classes involve four to six sessions and require the student to pass a written test and demonstrate firearm handling skills.

The Department offers both a live course option and a home study option. Live courses are scheduled throughout the state.

Hunter education courses are taught by volunteers, either individually or as a team, who are trained and certified by the Department. All instructors must be at least 21 years of age and undergo a background investigation by the Department.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The Department is directed to create non-monetary incentives to encourage more individuals to volunteer their time as hunter education instructors.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: There are more people interested in taking classes in hunter education than there are available classroom spaces. This is especially true late in the year when many instructors are unavailable due to the hunting season, and last minute applicants need to fulfill their education requirement. This bill attempts to increase the supply of instructors by providing a benefit to the volunteers without impacting the state's budget or running afoul of federal grant restrictions. The problem of insufficient classroom space will only increase as more and more people seek hunting opportunities. This is a reasonable approach to solving a real problem.

(With concerns) The Department does not need a bill to create incentives for hunter education volunteers. This could be implemented through administrative rule.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Cox, prime sponsor; Ed Owens, Hunters Heritage Council; and Bruce Bjork, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

(With concerns) Richard Mann, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.