



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AMENDMENT MEMO

2007 Assembly Bill 672

Assembly Amendment 1

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Current law sets the minimum age for hunting at 12 years of age. Also, a child under the age of 12 may possess a firearm only if enrolled in a hunter's education class and carrying a firearm to or from the class, cased, unloaded, and under the supervision of a parent or guardian, or handling a firearm in a hunter's education class under supervision of the instructor. Anyone who was born after January 1, 1973 must have a hunter's education certificate in order to hunt.

Assembly Bill 672 amends the current exception and creates two new exceptions to the current prohibition on hunting or possession of firearms by a person under the age of 12. The bill changes the current exception to allow supervision by a person who is age 18 or over and is designated by a parent or guardian. The bill creates an additional exception for possession of a firearm by a person less than the age of 12 if the youth is engaged in target practice, accompanied by a parent or guardian, or accompanied by a person who is age 18 or over and designated by the parent or guardian.

Assembly Bill 672 creates a mentor program which consists of an additional exemption from current statutory restrictions to allow hunting by certain youth. Under the bill, current age restrictions and hunter's education requirements do not apply to a person aged 10 or over while hunting with a qualified mentor. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is authorized to lower the minimum age for the mentor program if the DNR determines that hunting by persons younger than 10 years of age does not present a safety risk. The DNR is required to consider existing studies and data on safety related to persons who hunt and possess firearms and are under 10 years of age. Under the bill, the mentor must be 18 years of age or older and must be a parent or guardian, or approved by the parent or guardian to be a mentor. The participation of the parent or guardian does not apply if the person being mentored is 18 years of age or older. The mentor must have a hunter's education certificate if required to for hunting. The mentor and the hunter must both hold hunting approvals and must each be within arm's reach of the other. The mentor and the student may have only one weapon between them and the mentor may only take one person hunting at a time. The DNR is required to give a pamphlet that contains hunter safety information to all hunters who are eligible to hunt.

Assembly Amendment 1 eliminates the provision requiring DNR to issue a safety information pamphlet to a person who is authorized to hunt with a mentor. The amendment deletes the requirement to obtain hunting approvals for hunting situations in which an approval is not required, such as hunting on land owned by the person, or hunting for birds on a bird hunting preserve. The amendment adds a delayed effective date so that the legislation takes effect on the first day of the third month after publication.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

Assembly Amendment 1 was offered by Representative Gunderson on January 29, 2008. The Assembly Committee on Natural Resources adopted Assembly Amendment 1 and recommended Assembly Bill 672 for passage, as amended, on February 21, 2008, each by a vote of Ayes, 11; Noes, 2.

MCP:jb:ksm