



PATRICK TESTIN

STATE SENATOR

DATE: June 1, 2017
RE: **Testimony on 2017 Senate Bill 257**
TO: Assembly Committee on Sporting Heritage, Mining, and Forestry
FROM: Senator Patrick Testin

Thank you Chairman Tiffany and committee members for hearing my testimony on Senate Bill 257. This is a pretty simple bill as it removes the age limit for those wishing to apply and receive preference points in order to receive a Class A bear license.

In Wisconsin, ten-year-olds can currently possess a bear tag if they are accompanied by a mentor. However, they may only obtain a bear tag if it is transferred to them from another citizen, which is usually an older family member. Wisconsinites can only begin applying for preference points for bear tags after they turn ten. Under current law, these children will often have to wait between six and ten years to obtain enough preference points to receive a bear tag. This change will put bear tag preference points in line with other game tags such as fisher, otter, bobcat, and wolf; all of which have no age requirement.

During these developmental years, children's interests change rapidly. This bill aims to keep a young hunter interested and vested in the sport by eliminating the age requirement and allowing our youth to obtain tags from the DNR independently. Young people are the future of our sporting heritage in Wisconsin, and we need to do everything possible to keep them involved and participating.

Wisconsin should continue to work to bring sportsmanship into the lives of our youth and Senate Bill 257 will assist many families to better engage in the ethical hunting of bears in Wisconsin. Thank you for hearing my testimony today. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.



ADAM JARCHOW

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 28TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony on Senate Bill 257 – Bear Preference Points
Senate Committee on Sporting Heritage, Mining, and Forestry
Thursday, June 1, 2017
9:00 a.m. – Room 201 SE

To receive a bear tag in Wisconsin, you must apply for and accumulate preference points. A person may apply for a preference point each year until a tag is issued. This can take anywhere from six to ten years, depending on which zone you intend to hunt in.

Under current law, a 10 year old child may possess a bear tag and hunt a bear as long as he is accompanied by a mentor. In order for that 10 year old to have a bear tag, the tag must be transferred to them by someone else. The person who transfers the tag (typically a mother or father) must apply for preference points each year until they are chosen, via lottery system, for a tag.

While a 10 year old can legally hunt a bear, that child cannot begin to send in for a preference point until he or she is 10. This means that he or she may not be able to hunt a bear until they are 16 to 20 years old. In that amount of time, the child may lose interest in bear hunting. Under this bill, a child of any age could apply for a preference point so that by the time they are legally able to hunt, they would be able to get a tag on their own. This practice is already in place in state law for children to apply for bobcat, fisher, otter, and wolf preference points.

This bill ensures that bear hunting in Wisconsin will continue on and the next generation of bear hunters will be ready to hunt when they become of age. Bear hunting is a vital part of Wisconsin's economy and has been a family activity for generations. With the passage of this bill, more children will get excited about bear hunting and keep the tradition alive.