WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2024 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 5234

By Delegates Winzenreid, Cooper, Sheedy, Smith, Hillenbrand, Hornby, Heckert, Horst, Ridenour, E. Pritt, and Griffith

[Introduced January 26, 2024; Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and Homeland Security then Finance]

A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto a new section, designated §20-2-28a, all relating to providing for free hunting licenses and fishing licenses for veterans with a post-traumatic stress disorder diagnosis.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

Article 2. Wildlife Resources.

Part II. Licenses and Permits.

§20-2-28a. Free hunting and fishing licenses for veterans with a Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) diagnosis.

(a) Free hunting and fishing licenses shall be provided to veterans who, at any stage of disability, have been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (hereinafter "PTSD") subject to the following terms:

(1) Licenses shall be free and awarded in five-year terms with unlimited potential for renewal;

(2) No more than 10% of licenses for a region, area, or district can be allocated in a year to free veteran licenses;

(3) Annual, institutional group fishing licenses shall be provided for facilities under the jurisdiction or licensed by Veterans Affairs (VA) medical centers shall be provided with a limitation of 20 participants per group;

(4) There shall be a quarterly transfer from the general fund to cover the cost of the free licenses;

(5) Free licenses shall only be provided to those veterans with a certification letter from the VA confirming the diagnosis;

(b) The Division of Natural Resources (DNR) are subject to all laws concerning medical confidentiality. Information used for verification of diagnosis purposes will not be released to any third party, whether a person or agency, and the documents, digital records, or any other form of record provided for said diagnostic reason shall be destroyed after processing.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to provide for free hunting licenses and fishing licenses for veterans with a post-traumatic stress disorder diagnosis.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.