

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2024 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

House Bill 5224

By Delegates Sheedy, Hillenbrand, Cooper,

Winzenreid, and Griffith

[Introduced January 26, 2024; Referred to the
Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources
then Government Organization]

1 A BILL to amend and reenact §20-2-30a of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating
 2 to exempting honorably discharged veterans from undergoing a hunter safety course as a
 3 prerequisite to obtaining a hunting license in this state.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

ARTICLE 2. WILDLIFE RESOURCES.

**§20-2-30a. Certificate of training; falsifying, altering, forging, counterfeiting or uttering
training certificate; penalties.**

1 (a) Notwithstanding any other provisions of this article, no base hunting license may be
 2 issued to any person who was born on or after January 1, 1975, unless the person submits to the
 3 person authorized to issue hunting licenses a certificate of training as provided in this section or
 4 proof of completion of any course which promotes as a major objective safety in the handling of
 5 firearms and of bow and arrows and which course is approved by the hunter education association
 6 or the director, or provides a State of West Virginia resident or nonresident hunting license from the
 7 previous hunting season that displays a certification of training, or attests that a hunter training
 8 course has been completed when purchasing a license or stamp online: *Provided*, That after
 9 January 1, 2013, a person may be issued a Class AH, Class AHJ, Class AAH and Class AAHJ
 10 apprentice hunting and trapping license pursuant to the provisions of section forty-two-y of this
 11 article and is exempt from the hunter training requirements set forth herein: *Provided further*, That
 12 honorably discharged veterans in this state shall be exempt from the hunter training requirements
 13 set forth herein.

14 (b) The director shall establish a course in the safe handling of firearms and of bows and
 15 arrows, such as the course approved by the Hunter Education Association. This course shall be
 16 given at least once per year in each county in this state and shall be taught by instructors certified
 17 by the director. In establishing and conducting this course, the director may cooperate with any
 18 reputable association or organization which promotes as a major objective safety in the handling
 19 of firearms and of bows and arrows: *Provided*, That any person holding a Class A-L or AB-L

20 lifetime resident license obtained prior to his or her fifteenth birthday shall be required to obtain a
21 certificate of training as provided in this section before hunting or trapping pursuant to said license.
22 This course of instruction shall be offered without charge, except for materials or ammunition
23 consumed. Upon satisfactory completion of the course, each person instructed in the course shall
24 be issued a certificate of training for the purposes of complying with the requirements of
25 subsection (a) of this section. The certificate shall be in the form prescribed by the director and
26 shall be valid for hunting license application purposes.

27 (c) (1) Upon satisfactory completion of this course, any person whose hunting license has
28 been revoked for a violation of the provisions of this chapter may petition the director for a
29 reduction of his or her revocation time. However, under no circumstances may the time be reduced
30 to less than one year.

31 (2) Successful completion of this course shall be required to consider the reinstatement of
32 a hunting license of any person whose license has been revoked due to a conviction for negligent
33 shooting of a human being or of livestock under the provisions of section fifty-seven of this article,
34 and who petitions the director for an early reinstatement of his or her hunting privileges. Such a
35 petitioner shall also comply with the other requirements for consideration of reinstatement
36 contained in section thirty-eight of this article.

37 (d) It is unlawful for any person to falsify, alter, forge, counterfeit or utter a certificate of
38 training. Any person who violates the provisions of this subsection is guilty of a misdemeanor and,
39 upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not less than \$500 nor more than \$1,000, or confined in jail
40 for a period not to exceed one year, or both fined and imprisoned.

41 (e) Nothing herein contained shall mandate that any county school district in the state be
42 responsible for implementing hunter safety education programs.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to exempt honorably discharged veterans from undergoing
a hunter safety course as a prerequisite to obtaining a hunting license in this state.

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