



DUEY STROEBEL

STATE SENATOR • 20TH DISTRICT

Testimony on SB 265

August 23, 2023

Thank you Chairman Stafsholt and members of the Senate Committee on Financial Institutions and Sporting Heritage for holding a public hearing on Senate Bill 265. SB 265 would simply codify in statute the requirement for all hunter education students under the age of 18 to attend an in-person field training session (“field day”) in order to receive their hunter education safety certificate. The bill would maintain the option for these students to either complete the traditional, in-person course or an online course prior to attending the field day. The online course with no field day would continue to be offered to adults only.

Since its inception in 1967, Wisconsin’s hunter education program has provided training and certification to over 1.2 million hunters. Over the ensuing 56 years, the 10-year average number of hunting incidents has declined by 90 percent. The success of the program can largely be attributed to the tireless efforts of our volunteer instructors who provide training to over 20,000 hunters per year. A number of changes were implemented over the past 15-20 years with the aim of modernizing and broadening the reach of the program. Nevertheless, the commitment to the four pillars of the longstanding method of instruction has remained the same (1. Educate; 2. Demonstrate; 3. Observe; and 4. Congratulate or Correct).

A critical component of the hunter education program for youth hunters in particular is the field training session that follows the classroom or online course of instruction. During the field training session, instructors engage in hands-on instruction and work through a wide-ranging checklist where students are trained and certified in the principles of firearm safety and the appropriate handling of firearms while hunting.

Since 2012, individuals 18 or older have been able to obtain hunter education certification through the completion of an online course with no field day. In its response to COVID-19, the DNR unilaterally decided to extend this offering to individuals below the age of 18 (from October 2020 through March 2022). During this year-and-a-half period, a number of parents, volunteer instructors, and hunting and conservation groups expressed concerns with the abrupt change in policy and the potential for a permanent shift away from hands-on training for youth hunters. This sentiment was reflected in the survey results from the DNR’s 2021 and 2022 Spring Hearings, in which 85% of participants (and 93% of respondents) expressed their support for requiring in-person, hands-on safety training for new hunters under the age of 18.

Wisconsin’s hunter education program has served as an invaluable resource for aspiring hunters to equip themselves with the necessary foundation of knowledge and skills to carry on our state’s rich hunting tradition. Students are of course expected to complement and build off this foundation through additional training and mentored hunting opportunities with experienced adult hunters (whether it be a parent, relative, neighbor or family friend). SB 265 will help to ensure that one of the primary mechanisms for instilling the core principles of safe and responsible hunting in our youth will continue into the future.



Ty BODDEN

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 59TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony on Senate Bill 265

Senate Committee on Financial Institutions and Sporting Heritage

Wednesday, July 23, 2023

Thank you, Chairman Stafsholt, Vice-Chairman Felzkowski, and members of the Financial Institutions and Sporting Heritage Committee for the opportunity to testify in favor of Senate Bill 265. I would also like to thank Senator Duey Stroebel and Representative Mark Born for authoring this legislation with me.

This issue was brought to my attention by a constituent who is a pillar within the hunter education system. The primary objective of hunter education is to produce safe, responsible, knowledgeable and involved hunters. Since its inception, Wisconsin's hunter education program has trained and certified over 1.2 million hunters. The success of the program has rested on the shoulders of the volunteer instructors who continue to train thousands of hunters per year. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the DNR decided to temporarily end the requirement for those under the age of 18 to participate in a field day training.

This legislation codifies current rules and requires the DNR to offer in-person and online hunter education for persons under the age of 18. The legislation also requires persons under the age of 18 to attend an in-person field training session and complete a certification exam following completion of the in-person or online course of instruction.

Furthermore, ensuring that the next generation of Wisconsin hunters is properly educated and trained to handle firearms is essential for preserving our sporting heritage. It is noteworthy that firearm accidents have declined significantly since the hunter safety course requirement was implemented. Without this requirement, we risk more firearm accidents, which could lead to negative publicity for hunters and firearm enthusiasts, thereby impacting public opinion in a day of unfavorable press. This is something outdoorsmen and women do not need to deal with. If we aim to expand and attract more people to these sports, I believe hands-on hunter safety field days will help do that. These opportunities provide individuals who lack family or friends to introduce them to the hunting world with a chance to learn and potentially become future sportsmen and women. This legislation guarantees that our youth are properly trained to handle firearms.

Again, thank you for your time and consideration of this bill. I respectfully ask for your support.



Senate Committee on Financial Institutions and Sporting Heritage

Senate Bill 265

Hunter Education Requirements for Persons Under the Age of 18

August 23, 2023

Good morning, Chair Stafsholt, and members of the Committee. I am Lieutenant Michael Weber, and I serve as the Hunter Education Administrator for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Division of Public Safety Resource Protection. With me today to help answer questions is Major April Dombrowski, Recreational Safety and Outdoor Skills Section Chief for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Division of Public Safety Resource Protection. Thank you for the opportunity to testify, for informational purposes, on Senate Bill 265, related to hunter education requirements for persons under the age of 18 and granting rule-making authority.

Under current law, the department is required to establish a hunter education program and bow hunter education program. The department is also required to offer an online course of instruction under the hunter education program for persons who are at least 18 years of age. In addition, persons born on or after January 1, 1973, must present one of the following to purchase any hunting license:

- Their Wisconsin hunter education certification.
- Proof of a hunter safety course recognized by the department from another state, province or country (reciprocity).
- A Wisconsin hunting license from a previous year that has the hunter safety number printed on it.
- Proof of successful completion of basic training in the US Armed Forces, Reserves or National Guard.

Since 1967, the department has provided hunter education to our citizens. Presently, the department is assisted by approximately 2500 active volunteer hunter education instructors. The hunter education program strives to provide quality hunter education courses across multiple platforms to ensure inclusiveness of various customer needs. Currently, these course options include the traditional in-person hunter education course, hunter education internet + field day course, and online-only hunter education course (only for those age 18 or older). Currently, the program's established policy only offers traditional and internet + field day courses to students under the age of 18. Both courses require hands on firearm training, with all students required to demonstrate safe firearm handling during a practical/field testing component to obtain certification.

This proposal would require the department to offer in-person and online hunter education for persons under the age of 18. It would also require persons under the age of 18 to attend an in-person field training session and complete a certification exam following completion of the in-person or online course of instruction.

While the hunter education program recognizes the value of hands-on firearm training and the contribution of the volunteer instructors, who have been vital to the program's continued success, it also

recognizes the importance of long-term strategic flexibility for the program to administer services that meets the needs of a diverse customer base now and into the future.

The trend in the number of volunteer instructors, not unlike volunteerism trends in many other community service sectors, continues to decline (approximately 3200 instructors in 2017 to 2500 instructors in 2022: a 22 percent decline. The trend in volunteers has declined 36 percent over the past 10 years) – it is essential that the program maintains flexibility in course option delivery to ensure that customer needs continue to be met in the future where instructor numbers could pose a barrier to additional program demands. The program has recognized this trend and is currently working toward efforts to recruit new instructors, retain current instructors through service recognition and appreciation, along with increasing staffing to conduct courses through limited termed employees (LTEs) and funding external partners through agreements.

Currently, under emergency circumstances, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic, the department transitioned to an all-online certification to allow for continued certifications. This was implemented to maximize safety for participants and volunteer instructors alike on a temporary basis during the pandemic, before ultimately transitioning back to in-person learning in 2021. It's these types of unforeseen events that demonstrate the benefits of flexible statutory programs to allow the Department to adjust—in real time—to the needs of its citizenry and the sporting public.

As a final point, the International Hunter Education Association (IHEA) is affiliated with all 50 state hunter education programs, allowing for reciprocity of hunter education certifications. One unintended consequence of permanently restricting course options for Wisconsin students simply may be the movement of those students to online-only courses in other states, which pursuant to the reciprocity standards, would also be valid in Wisconsin.

On behalf of the Department of Natural Resources, we would like to thank you for your time today. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Testimony In Support of Senate Bill 265

By Thomas Thoresen, Fitchburg, WI

August 23, 2023

Thank You Senator Stafsholt and members of the Senate Sporting Heritage Committee. I'm Thomas Thoresen and I'm here to **ask for your support of Senate Bill 265**. I have been a hunter in Wisconsin for over 56 years. On a professional level, I am very knowledgeable about the issues of hunter safety and education as I was hired as a state conservation warden in 1979 and promoted to a Law Enforcement Safety Specialist in the DNR South East District in 1984, helping implement the state's mandatory Hunter Education Law that went into effect in 1985. I continued to be involved in overseeing the Hunter Education Program as either the Deputy Division Administrator, DNR Law Enforcement Safety Section Chief or Deputy Chief Warden 1989 to 2005. After I retired in 2005 with over 30 years of state service, I continued to teach Hunter Education with many of the other dedicated volunteer instructors that are the backbone of Hunter Education. Because we have limited time, I will emphasize three important reasons to **pass SB 265**: 1). The need for **public safety**, 2). The strong **public support** for legislation and 3). The need for a program that both the hunting and the non-hunting public supports to help **continue our Hunting Heritage**.

1). The number one reason to pass SB 265 is the need for **public safety**. Because of the increasing number of hunting accidents occurring in the 1950's and 60's the legislature wisely recognized the need for a statewide Hunter Education program that would help accident reduction. This legislation was assigned to the DNR and the conservation wardens to administer in 1967. Education and enforcement of safety laws continued accident reduction. (See Attachment #1 taken from the 2022 DNR Annual Report). The legislature required mandatory training for those born after Jan. 1 1973 which took effect in 1985. I know the need for the required hands on training of our youth firsthand. It was in the fall of 1984 only months before mandatory hunter education was required, I along with conservation warden John Lacenski investigated a fatal accident, now called an incident in Waukesha County where a 12 year old boy tragically shot himself while hunting because he didn't follow the basic firearm safety rules taught in class.

2). The second reason to pass this legislation is closely tied to the first reason in that the public knows and understands that hunter education makes a positive difference in both safety and help creating responsible hunters. **The public strongly supports "hands on" training for those under 18**. The issue of requiring "hands on training" for those under 18 has been well vetted with the public, especially hunters, anglers and conservation groups. In 2021 the issue was taken to the WI Spring Conservation Hearings where the resolutions requiring hands on training for those under 18 were overwhelmingly passed in all 29 counties with 92 % of supporting the idea and only 8% opposed. In 2022 the Conservation Congress asked the question of requiring "hands on" safety training for those under 18 be taken up statewide. It

again passed in all counties with over a 93% margin supporting for those voting. (See Attachment # 2 from Conservation Congress Spring Hearings 2022) supporting for those voting. In St Croix County the vote in favor was 894 to 66 against or 93% . In Marathon County the vote was 2460 in favor and 197 against or again 93%. In Lincoln County the vote was 1670 in favor, 127 against or 93 % . In Dane County the vote was 5,507 for requiring hands training on for those under 18 and 154 against or 97%. In Rock County the vote was 1118 for and 66 against or 94 % . (See attachments 3 -7) Whether rural, suburban or urban, citizens statewide want this legislation to assure safety and the positive aspects on “Hands on training” for those under 18.

3). The third reason this legislation is needed for our **Hunting Heritage** is again tied to the first two. There are many families who will only let their young son or daughter go hunting only after they have received either a traditional “ hands on” class or taken an internet class followed by a “hands on’ field training and evaluation day. Parents have told me they are uncomfortable to let their young son or daughter start hunting without this practical knowledge and demonstration of safe firearm practices. The “hands on” training requirement is also very important to non-hunters and landowners as we know there are private landowners who will not give permission to a hunter to hunt on their property unless they have had hands on training. Hunters currently have support of most non hunters because they deem hunting safe and a much needed management tool to have sustainable wildlife populations and provide recreation, economic benefits. Hunters depend on the support of non-hunters and this legislation gives the public reasonable reassurance that a base level of safety training and responsible hunting has been achieved.

Thank you once again for having this public hearing and hearing my testimony. I strongly urge you to support and pass this legislation to assure continued 1.) **Public safety**, 2). Assure that vetted **public support** on legislation is followed up on, and 3). Continue support for our **Hunting Heritage** by both hunters and non-hunters.

Submitted by:

Thomas Thoresen

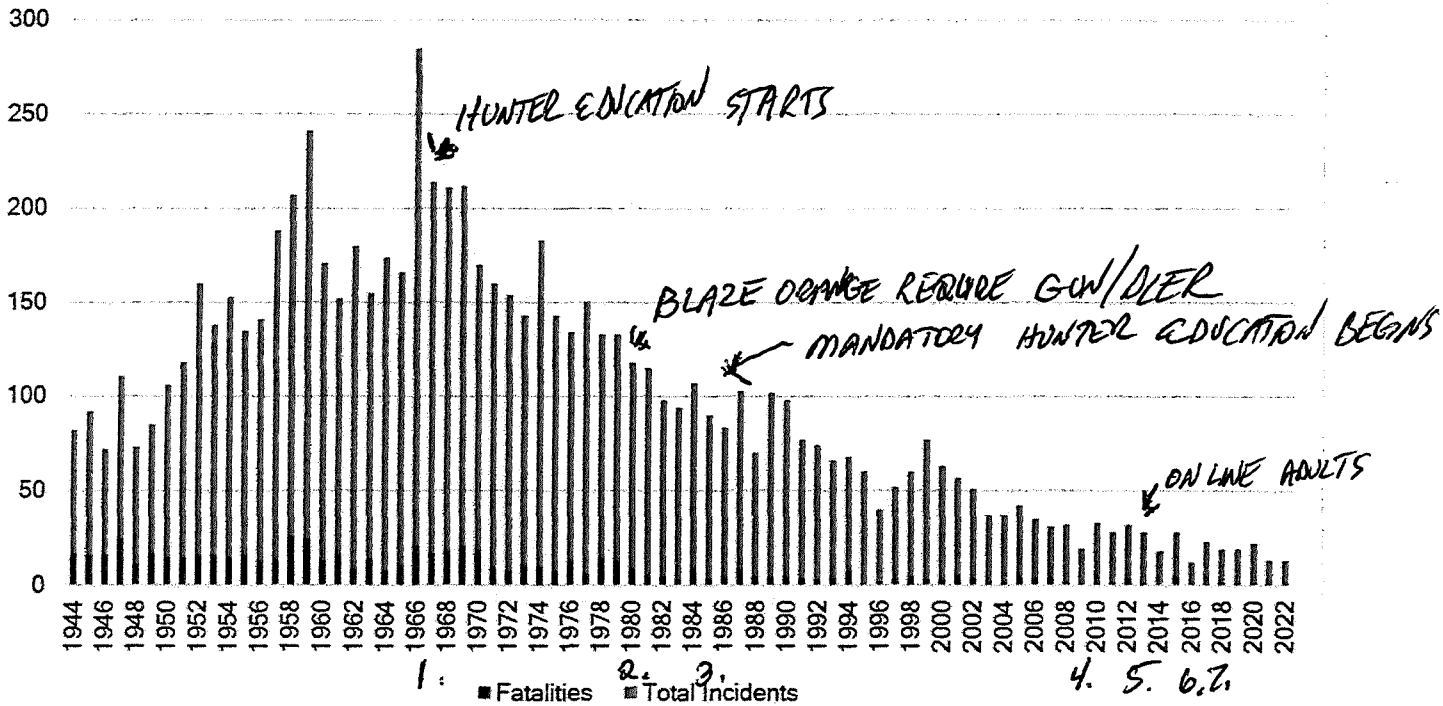
A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Thomas Thoresen". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the printed name.

5874 Persimmon Drive,

Fitchburg, WI 53711

SOURCE: WIS. DNR 2022 HUNTER EDUCATION ANNUAL REPORT

Hunting Incidents, 1944-2022



Important Dates In Wisconsin Hunter Education History

1. 1967 - Hunter Education Begins
2. 1980 - Mandatory use of Blaze Orange
3. 1985 - Mandatory Hunter Education Begins
4. 2009 - September Mentored Hunting Law Passed. Children ages 10 and up may hunt without hunter education
5. 2012 - Wisconsin ACT 168 - Adult hunter education available in online format
6. 2016 - Wisconsin ACT 131 - Blaze Pink introduced as acceptable alternative to Blaze Orange
7. 2017 - Wisconsin Act 62 erased the requirement that a person be at least 10 years old to hunt under the hunting mentorship program. The act also removed the restriction prohibiting a mentee and a mentor from possessing more than one weapon between them while hunting

2022 Hunting Incident Summary

There were 12 hunting incidents, including one fatality, during the 2022 hunting season. Hunting is a safe activity in Wisconsin and continues to be safe, with the number of incidents in 2022 well below the 10-year average of 18.1.

STATEWIDE
CONS. CONGRESS TOTALS #48
QUESTION

ATTACHMENT #2

No.	Question Description	All Participants			Wisconsin Residents			Counties Tie	WCC Position
		Yes	No	No Opinion	Yes	No	No Opinion		
2022 OVERALL PARTICIPATION		28,176			27,519				
43	Do you support the Conservation Congress working with the Wisconsin legislature to add an exception to ss 167.31(2)(d) to allow the dispatch of legally trapped furbearing animals with a rimfire rifle or handgun within fifty feet of the centerline of any unpaved road?	14331	3039	4868	14111	2948	4745		
44	Do you support a change to the Wisconsin trapping regulations to reduce the period during which the 7 inch size restriction is in place from the opening day of trapping season to the opening day of the wolf season, or November 30, whichever comes first?	7928	4570	9698	7810	4436	9519		
45	Do you support a change in the existing trapping regulation as described above that would exempt disabled trappers from trap placement and setting requirements when trapping bobcats, fishers or otters?	8822	5156	8183	8696	4999	8035		
46	Would you support the Conservation Congress working with the state's legislature and the DNR to establish regulations permitting persons with a valid small game license to use a slingshot to hunt Small Game Mammals (squirrels, rabbits and hares) and unprotected species?	10791	6494	4828	10649	6322	4712		
47	Do you support a population management goal of 350 wolves or less for the state of Wisconsin?	13136	6633	2326	12978	6410	2277		
48	Would you support the Conservation Congress, in an effort to continue the reduction of hunting incidents, work with the NRB and State Legislature to mandate that any new hunter under the age of 18 be required to take an in-person, "hands-on" safety course?	19000	1319	1726	18663	1293	1662		938 OF APPROX VOTING
49	Would you support the Conservation Congress, in an effort to continue the reduction of hunting incidents, work with the NRB and State Legislature to mandate that any new hunter, regardless of age, be required to take an in-person, "hands-on" safety course?	16290	3661	2094	15988	3607	2023		
50	Would you support the Conservation Congress working with the state legislature to allow Purple Heart recipients the right and privilege to hunt bear first, on private land, in both even and odd numbered years?	9785	6234	6006	9659	6069	5871		
51	Would you support waiving the license requirement for an assistant who is helping a person with a disability with the process of fishing, including baiting, casting, retrieving and handling of the fish? The assistant would need to be in direct contact with the person with a disability at all times and the person with the disability would need to have a valid fishing license.	17023	2923	2051	16746	2839	1986		
52	Do you support the conservation Congress work with the DNR and the legislature to develop a Wanton Waste law that will prohibit the waste of game animals in Wisconsin?	14898	2903	4171	14576	2872	4098		
53	Do you support the Conservation Congress work with the DNR and legislature to develop a permitting and regulating process for hunting contests, similar to what they already do for fishing contests?	11557	6369	4006	11282	6284	3940		
54	Do you support the State of Wisconsin identifying funds available to purchase of the remaining 760 acres?	13767	1495	6635	13491	1465	6516		
55	Do you favor the DNR and the NRB working with the Legislature to create a registration system and fee for canoes and kayaks? The system would take into consideration individuals and businesses with multiple canoes and kayaks (camps, rentals, etc).	5219	15013	1634	5092	14813	1536		
56	Do you favor requiring contact information for the owner placed on of canoes and kayaks with no fee associated (similar to the requirements for treestands, traps, and ice shacks)	9737	10000	2129	9559	9854	2028		
57	Do you support having all of Wisconsin's Congressional delegation support the passage of Recovering America's Wildlife Act in this session?	12633	2137	7043	12354	2108	6928		
58	Do you favor the Wisconsin Conservation Congress working with the DNR to change the definition of a muzzleloader for the muzzleloader only deer season?	8447	5331	8005	8307	5265	7788		

SAINT CROIX (56)

All respondents that indicated they reside in the county

All online input of respondents that indicated they recreate in the county.

Question Description

No.	COUNTY INPUT	All respondents that indicated they reside in the county				All online input of respondents that indicated they recreate in the county.			
		Yes	No	No Opinion	Maj.	Yes	No	No Opinion	Maj.
		402				877			
40	To help protect the spawning sized walleye population of Lake Wissota, would you support a 3 bag daily limit with a 14-16" harvest limit, protected slot of 16-24" and one over 24" allowed as part of the daily bag?	188	14	120	Yes	444	63	214	Yes
41	Would you support making Woodman Lake a slow no wake body of water?	166	38	118	Yes	319	112	290	Yes
42	Do you support the Conservation Congress working with the DNR, Legislature, and the NRB to allow passengers on ATV's not designed to transport passengers, for hunting, fishing, trapping, and agricultural activities?	175	105	41	Yes	454	170	97	Yes
43	Do you support the Conservation Congress working with the Wisconsin legislature to add an exception to ss 167.31(2)(d) to allow the dispatch of legally trapped furbearing animals with a rimfire rifle or handgun within fifty feet of the centerline of any unpaved road?	207	49	64	Yes	465	112	142	Yes
44	Do you support a change to the Wisconsin trapping regulations to reduce the period during which the 7 inch size restriction is in place from the opening day of trapping season to the opening day of the wolf season, or November 30, whichever comes first?	120	86	114	Yes	267	179	273	Yes
45	Do you support a change in the existing trapping regulation as described above that would exempt disabled trappers from trap placement and setting requirements when trapping bobcats, fishers or otters?	124	94	102	Yes	308	180	229	Yes
46	Would you support the Conservation Congress working with the state's legislature and the DNR to establish regulations permitting persons with a valid small game license to use a slingshot to hunt Small Game Mammals (squirrels, rabbits and hares) and unprotected species?	157	103	60	Yes	390	193	133	Yes
47	Do you support a population management goal of 350 wolves or less for the state of Wisconsin?	168	132	20	Yes	398	257	60	Yes
48	Would you support the Conservation Congress, in an effort to continue the reduction of hunting incidents, work with the NRB and State Legislature to mandate that any new hunter under the age of 18 be required to take an in-person, "hands-on" safety course?	277	16	27	Yes	617	46	52	Yes
49	Would you support the Conservation Congress, in an effort to continue the reduction of hunting incidents, work with the NRB and State Legislature to mandate that any new hunter, regardless of age, be required to take an in-person, "hands-on" safety course?	236	55	29	Yes	530	127	58	Yes
50	Would you support the Conservation Congress working with the state legislature to allow Purple Heart recipients the right and privilege to hunt bear first, on private land, in both even and odd numbered years?	121	109	90	Yes	314	217	184	Yes
51	Would you support waiving the license requirement for an assistant who is helping a person with a disability with the process of fishing, including baiting, casting, retrieving and handling of the fish? The assistant would need to be in direct contact with the person with a disability at all times and the person with the disability would need to have a valid fishing license.	238	53	28	Yes	572	96	47	Yes
52	Do you support the conservation Congress work with the DNR and the legislature to develop a Wanton Waste law that will prohibit the waste of game animals in Wisconsin?	218	51	49	Yes	475	123	117	Yes
53	Do you support the Conservation Congress work with the DNR and legislature to develop a permitting and regulating process for hunting contests, similar to what they already do for fishing contests?	175	103	40	Yes	384	216	115	Yes
54	Do you support the State of Wisconsin identifying funds available to purchase of the remaining 760 acres?	204	25	89	Yes	521	55	138	Yes

X

		MARATHON (37)							
		All respondents that indicated they reside in the county				All online input of respondents that indicated they recreate in the county.			
No.	Question Description	Yes	No	No Opinion	Ma.	Yes	No	No Opinion	Ma.
No.	COUNTY INPUT	1216				2464			
40	To help protect the spawning sized walleye population of Lake Wissota, would you support a 3 bag daily limit with a 14-16" harvest limit, protected slot of 16-24" and one over 24" allowed as part of the daily bag?	520	66	381	Yes	1133	155	703	Yes
41	Would you support making Woodman Lake a slow no wake body of water?	372	74	521	Yes	795	201	993	Yes
42	Do you support the Conservation Congress working with the DNR, Legislature, and the NRB to allow passengers on ATV's not designed to transport passengers, for hunting, fishing, trapping, and agricultural activities?	692	136	138	Yes	1349	366	272	Yes
43	Do you support the Conservation Congress working with the Wisconsin legislature to add an exception to ss 167.31(2)(d) to allow the dispatch of legally trapped furbearing animals with a rimfire rifle or handgun within fifty feet of the centerline of any unpaved road?	602	103	261	Yes	1242	251	493	Yes
44	Do you support a change to the Wisconsin trapping regulations to reduce the period during which the 7 inch size restriction is in place from the opening day of trapping season to the opening day of the wolf season, or November 30, whichever comes first?	332	155	479	Yes	724	361	900	Yes
45	Do you support a change in the existing trapping regulation as described above that would exempt disabled trappers from trap placement and setting requirements when trapping bobcats, fishers or otters?	377	172	416	Yes	804	409	767	Yes
46	Would you support the Conservation Congress working with the state's legislature and the DNR to establish regulations permitting persons with a valid small game license to use a slingshot to hunt Small Game Mammals (squirrels, rabbits and hares) and unprotected species?	488	222	251	Yes	998	516	460	Yes
47	Do you support a population management goal of 350 wolves or less for the state of Wisconsin?	643	179	137	Yes	1210	516	246	Yes
* 48	Would you support the Conservation Congress, in an effort to continue the reduction of hunting incidents, work with the NRB and State Legislature to mandate that any new hunter under the age of 18 be required to take an in-person, "hands-on" safety course?	795	62	102	Yes	1665	133	172	Yes
49	Would you support the Conservation Congress, in an effort to continue the reduction of hunting incidents, work with the NRB and State Legislature to mandate that any new hunter, regardless of age, be required to take an in-person, "hands-on" safety course?	651	171	137	Yes	1408	329	232	Yes
50	Would you support the Conservation Congress working with the state legislature to allow Purple Heart recipients the right and privilege to hunt bear first, on private land, in both even and odd numbered years?	407	246	306	Yes	874	515	580	Yes
51	Would you support waiving the license requirement for an assistant who is helping a person with a disability with the process of fishing, including baiting, casting, retrieving and handling of the fish? The assistant would need to be in direct contact with the person with a disability at all times and the person with the disability would need to have a valid fishing license.	764	104	90	Yes	1551	239	178	Yes
52	Do you support the conservation Congress work with the DNR and the legislature to develop a Wanton Waste law that will prohibit the waste of game animals in Wisconsin?	602	112	244	Yes	1283	263	421	Yes
53	Do you support the Conservation Congress work with the DNR and legislature to develop a permitting and regulating process for hunting contests, similar to what they already do for fishing contests?	448	260	247	Yes	1003	542	419	Yes
54	Do you support the State of Wisconsin identifying funds available to purchase of the remaining 760 acres?	530	68	357	Yes	1194	146	623	Yes

		LINCOLN (35)							
		All respondents that indicated they reside in the county				All online input of respondents that indicated they recreate in the county.			
No.	Question Description								
COUNTY INPUT		533				1844			
40	To help protect the spawning sized walleye population of Lake Wissota, would you support a 3 bag daily limit with a 14-16" harvest limit, protected slot of 16-24" and one over 24" allowed as part of the daily bag?	207	35	192	Yes	859	128	559	Yes
41	Would you support making Woodman Lake a slow no wake body of water?	140	49	243	Yes	615	169	759	Yes
42	Do you support the Conservation Congress working with the DNR, Legislature, and the NRB to allow passengers on ATV's not designed to transport passengers, for hunting, fishing, trapping, and agricultural activities?	313	72	47	Yes	1104	285	153	Yes
43	Do you support the Conservation Congress working with the Wisconsin legislature to add an exception to ss 167.31(2)(d) to allow the dispatch of legally trapped furbearing animals with a rimfire rifle or handgun within fifty feet of the centerline of any unpaved road?	278	49	105	Yes	1073	171	298	Yes
44	Do you support a change to the Wisconsin trapping regulations to reduce the period during which the 7 inch size restriction is in place from the opening day of trapping season to the opening day of the wolf season, or November 30, whichever comes first?	160	77	195	Yes	594	310	638	Yes
45	Do you support a change in the existing trapping regulation as described above that would exempt disabled trappers from trap placement and setting requirements when trapping bobcats, fishers or otters?	181	89	161	Yes	656	332	549	Yes
46	Would you support the Conservation Congress working with the state's legislature and the DNR to establish regulations permitting persons with a valid small game license to use a slingshot to hunt Small Game Mammals (squirrels, rabbits and hares) and unprotected species?	237	108	84	Yes	809	432	290	Yes
47	Do you support a population management goal of 350 wolves or less for the state of Wisconsin?	307	79	43	Yes	1037	352	141	Yes
48	Would you support the Conservation Congress, in an effort to continue the reduction of hunting incidents, work with the NRB and State Legislature to mandate that any new hunter under the age of 18 be required to take an in-person, "hands-on" safety course?	363	25	38	Yes	1307	102	117	Yes
49	Would you support the Conservation Congress, in an effort to continue the reduction of hunting incidents, work with the NRB and State Legislature to mandate that any new hunter, regardless of age, be required to take an in-person, "hands-on" safety course?	297	84	45	Yes	1095	281	150	Yes
50	Would you support the Conservation Congress working with the state legislature to allow Purple Heart recipients the right and privilege to hunt bear first, on private land, in both even and odd numbered years?	227	85	114	Yes	742	404	380	Yes
51	Would you support waiving the license requirement for an assistant who is helping a person with a disability with the process of fishing, including baiting, casting, retrieving and handling of the fish? The assistant would need to be in direct contact with the person with a disability at all times and the person with the disability would need to have a valid fishing license.	317	57	51	Yes	1188	214	123	Yes
52	Do you support the conservation Congress work with the DNR and the legislature to develop a Wanton Waste law that will prohibit the waste of game animals in Wisconsin?	244	63	116	Yes	966	236	318	Yes
53	Do you support the Conservation Congress work with the DNR and legislature to develop a permitting and regulating process for hunting contests, similar to what they already do for fishing contests?	177	150	96	Yes	748	497	275	Yes
54	Do you support the State of Wisconsin identifying funds available to purchase of the remaining 760 acres?	201	38	184	Yes	895	126	497	Yes
55	Do you favor the DNR and the NRB working with the Legislature to create a registration system and fee for canoes and kayaks? The system would take into consideration individuals and businesses with multiple canoes and kayaks (camps, rentals, etc).	49	361	13	No	256	1199	62	No
56	Do you favor requiring contact information for the owner placed on of canoes and kayaks with no fee associated (similar to the requirements for treestands, traps, and ice shacks)	160	244	19	No	628	797	92	No



		DANE (13)							
		All respondents that indicated they reside in the county				All online input of respondents that indicated they recreate in the county.			
No.	Question Description								
COUNTY INPUT		3003				4592			
40	To help protect the spawning sized walleye population of Lake Wissota, would you support a 3 bag daily limit with a 14-16" harvest limit, protected slot of 16-24" and one over 24" allowed as part of the daily bag?	1516	50	763	Yes	2309	117	1241	Yes
41	Would you support making Woodman Lake a slow no wake body of water?	1245	284	798	Yes	1882	460	1323	Yes
42	Do you support the Conservation Congress working with the DNR, Legislature, and the NRB to allow passengers on ATV's not designed to transport passengers, for hunting, fishing, trapping, and agricultural activities?	758	1052	515	No	1437	1476	750	No
43	Do you support the Conservation Congress working with the Wisconsin legislature to add an exception to ss 167.31(2)(d) to allow the dispatch of legally trapped furbearing animals with a rimfire rifle or handgun within fifty feet of the centerline of any unpaved road?	1066	581	676	Yes	1790	846	1024	Yes
44	Do you support a change to the Wisconsin trapping regulations to reduce the period during which the 7 inch size restriction is in place from the opening day of trapping season to the opening day of the wolf season, or November 30, whichever comes first?	633	761	924	No	1020	1100	1527	No
45	Do you support a change in the existing trapping regulation as described above that would exempt disabled trappers from trap placement and setting requirements when trapping bobcats, fishers or otters?	615	905	793	No	1030	1284	1328	No
46	Would you support the Conservation Congress working with the state's legislature and the DNR to establish regulations permitting persons with a valid small game license to use a slingshot to hunt Small Game Mammals (squirrels, rabbits and hares) and unprotected species?	817	960	533	No	1376	1389	871	No
47	Do you support a population management goal of 350 wolves or less for the state of Wisconsin?	539	1534	237	No	1068	2119	448	No
* 48	Would you support the Conservation Congress, in an effort to continue the reduction of hunting incidents, work with the NRB and State Legislature to mandate that any new hunter under the age of 18 be required to take an in-person, "hands-on" safety course?	2104	44	161	Yes	3259	110	264	Yes
49	Would you support the Conservation Congress, in an effort to continue the reduction of hunting incidents, work with the NRB and State Legislature to mandate that any new hunter, regardless of age, be required to take an in-person, "hands-on" safety course?	1966	159	184	Yes	2977	331	325	Yes
50	Would you support the Conservation Congress working with the state legislature to allow Purple Heart recipients the right and privilege to hunt bear first, on private land, in both even and odd numbered years?	532	1023	751	No	984	1434	1213	No
51	Would you support waiving the license requirement for an assistant who is helping a person with a disability with the process of fishing, including baiting, casting, retrieving and handling of the fish? The assistant would need to be in direct contact with the person with a disability at all times and the person with the disability would need to have a valid fishing license.	1779	323	202	Yes	2799	500	329	Yes
52	Do you support the conservation Congress work with the DNR and the legislature to develop a Wanton Waste law that will prohibit the waste of game animals in Wisconsin?	1928	113	261	Yes	2817	277	526	Yes
53	Do you support the Conservation Congress work with the DNR and legislature to develop a permitting and regulating process for hunting contests, similar to what they already do for fishing contests?	1796	264	239	Yes	2586	547	483	Yes
54	Do you support the State of Wisconsin identifying funds available to purchase of the remaining 760 acres?	1846	72	378	Yes	2750	153	711	Yes
55	Do you favor the DNR and the NRB working with the Legislature to create a registration system and fee for canoes and kayaks? The system would take into consideration individuals and businesses with multiple canoes and kayaks (camps, rentals, etc).	863	1182	247	No	1180	2105	319	No
56	Do you favor requiring contact information for the owner placed on of canoes and kayaks with no fee associated (similar to the requirements for treestands, traps, and ice shacks)	1238	730	324	Yes	1916	1272	416	Yes

DNR Spring Hearings - WCC County Meetings Summary of Results by County

No.	Question Description	ROCK (54)							
		All respondents that indicated they reside in the county				All online input of respondents that indicated they recreate in the county.			
		Yes	No	No Opinion	Maj.	Yes	No	No Opinion	Maj.
	COUNTY INPUT	457				1135			
40	To help protect the spawning sized walleye population of Lake Wissota, would you support a 3 bag daily limit with a 14-16" harvest limit, protected slot of 16-24" and one over 24" allowed as part of the daily bag?	198	27	139	Yes	549	62	328	Yes
41	Would you support making Woodman Lake a slow no wake body of water?	145	39	180	Yes	438	131	369	Yes
42	Do you support the Conservation Congress working with the DNR, Legislature, and the NRB to allow passengers on ATV's not designed to transport passengers, for hunting, fishing, trapping, and agricultural activities?	233	76	55	Yes	511	281	145	Yes
43	Do you support the Conservation Congress working with the Wisconsin legislature to add an exception to ss 167.31(2)(d) to allow the dispatch of legally trapped furbearing animals with a rimfire rifle or handgun within fifty feet of the centerline of any unpaved road?	234	43	87	Yes	537	163	235	Yes
44	Do you support a change to the Wisconsin trapping regulations to reduce the period during which the 7 inch size restriction is in place from the opening day of trapping season to the opening day of the wolf season, or November 30, whichever comes first?	109	60	195	Yes	289	232	414	Yes
45	Do you support a change in the existing trapping regulation as described above that would exempt disabled trappers from trap placement and setting requirements when trapping bobcats, fishers or otters?	133	65	166	Yes	314	257	364	Yes
46	Would you support the Conservation Congress working with the state's legislature and the DNR to establish regulations permitting persons with a valid small game license to use a slingshot to hunt Small Game Mammals (squirrels, rabbits and hares) and unprotected species?	185	94	83	Yes	417	299	218	Yes
47	Do you support a population management goal of 350 wolves or less for the state of Wisconsin?	220	74	68	Yes	429	362	142	Yes
* 48	Would you support the Conservation Congress, in an effort to continue the reduction of hunting incidents, work with the NRB and State Legislature to mandate that any new hunter under the age of 18 be required to take an in-person, "hands-on" safety course?	302	21	37	Yes	806	46	79	Yes
49	Would you support the Conservation Congress, in an effort to continue the reduction of hunting incidents, work with the NRB and State Legislature to mandate that any new hunter, regardless of age, be required to take an in-person, "hands-on" safety course?	252	61	47	Yes	698	132	101	Yes
50	Would you support the Conservation Congress working with the state legislature to allow Purple Heart recipients the right and privilege to hunt bear first, on private land, in both even and odd numbered years?	169	70	121	Yes	348	287	296	Yes
51	Would you support waiving the license requirement for an assistant who is helping a person with a disability with the process of fishing, including baiting, casting, retrieving and handling of the fish? The assistant would need to be in direct contact with the person with a disability at all times and the person with the disability would need to have a valid fishing license.	275	33	52	Yes	718	118	94	Yes
52	Do you support the conservation Congress work with the DNR and the legislature to develop a Wanton Waste law that will prohibit the waste of game animals in Wisconsin?	220	49	89	Yes	628	120	179	Yes
53	Do you support the Conservation Congress work with the DNR and legislature to develop a permitting and regulating process for hunting contests, similar to what they already do for fishing contests?	170	113	74	Yes	527	232	168	Yes
54	Do you support the State of Wisconsin identifying funds available to purchase of the remaining 760 acres?	205	18	134	Yes	610	58	259	Yes

Date: August 23, 2023

Subject: Senate Bill 265

To: Committee on Financial Institution and Sporting Heritage

My name is Taylor Muraski, and I am honored to stand before you today as a representative of the eight junior instructors part of the Campbellsport Hunters Safety Program. This coming school year, I will be a junior at Campbellsport High School. Today, I am here to share our [the junior instructors] collective perspective on the proposed Senate Bill 265. Each one of the junior instructors you see here today, and the others that were not able to join us have graduated from the traditional class led by Rick Heisler. Reflecting on our own experiences, the benefits we derived from the class were immense; however, it was the hands-on training that truly stood out. The ability to physically engage with real firearms under the guidance of experts is something that no online module will ever be able to replicate.

Our instructors taught us the various parts of firearms, how to safely use them, transport them, etc. While much of this was explained to us thoroughly during the classroom portion of the class, this hands-on training equipped us with the practical skills and confidence required to venture into the field both responsibly and ethically.

Learning how to safely use firearms ensures our own safety, the safety of those around us, and the safety of the environment. Our main goal is to keep the safety of our sport going into the next generation, which is why each of us decided to become junior instructors. We take immense pride in assisting with hands-on training, which we firmly believe is the most effective and positive means of ensuring safe hunting practices.

In conclusion, this hands-on course is less than twenty hours but holds knowledge and experiences that these students carry for a lifetime of safe hunting. When you place your vote, please think of your own children or grandchildren. Would you want them and the people they are surrounded with to have an interactive hunter safety education taught by experienced hunters, or would you want them taught by a computer? This bill has the potential to shape a future of safe, ethical hunters, and the Campbellsport Junior Instructors greatly urge you to be a part of passing it.

We junior instructors would like to express our sincere gratitude for considering this bill, and taking your time to hear what we have to say.

Respectfully,

Brady Butzlaff

Braeden Cerny

Colin Boegel

Elsie Lindsley

Hudson McCarty

Spencer Immel

Taylor Muraski

Trenton Schladweiler

Date: August 23, 2023
To: Senate Committee on Financial Institutions and Sporting Heritage
Subject: Support of 2023 SENATE BILL 265

My name is Rick Heisler, and I have been a hunter safety instructor for 44 years. With the assistance of a dedicated instructor group, I have assisted in educating around 3,500 students in Hands-On safety training. I am also very active working with the youth of our community in several means of sporting opportunities. I serve as a member of several nonprofit conservation organizations dedicated to natural resource preservation and education through youth and community involvement.

I strongly support Senate Bill 265 relating to requirements of hunter education students under the age of 18 to attend an in-person field training session and complete a certification exam following completion of the in-person or online course of instruction.

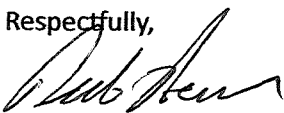
It has been a great pleasure over the years to instruct students in a meaningful, and proven means of safety training. It is truly my opinion there is no substitute for being present with a student and providing them with meaningful and long-lasting experiences. Hands-On training provides the student the opportunity to self-correct with the guidance and direction of the instructor. While online study provides the basics in knowledge of the subject, students simply learn more effectively when provided the opportunity to experience the subject matter in a natural repetition, rather than being distanced by a computer screen and lack of face-to-face interaction. This especially holds true in training individuals with various types of disabilities. I view the results of training these special individuals in Hands-On Training as a gratifying and rewarding experience.

Hands-On training provides the student with the opportunity to safely make mistakes naturally through trial and error. The training we are referring to provides the student with experiences which can be corrected now, rather than in the hunting field or shooting range. Mistakes by the gun handler in the field can result in devastating consequences, which cannot be recalled. The safe practices of the gun handler are vital to their welfare, and that of the environment surrounding them. In life, unlike when video gaming, mistakes and accidents cannot be called back, and the outcomes can certainly be devastating to say the least. Hands-On training can provide the best means to prevent these devastating consequences. The decline in hunting-related accidents over the years has proven this.

Humans naturally learn by making mistakes. Being taught through Hands-On training can provide them with knowledge and skills which can be utilized in a proper format of meeting challenges without any means of hesitation. If the student can generate confidence in a proper training format, it generates lifelong confidence in firearm-handling experiences. Knowing the student leaves the course with a thorough means of training is an effective accomplishment I am extremely proud of. Hands-On learning is a rewarding way for students to explore and retain a lifelong learning experience. The importance of them always being conscientious of providing the utmost in safety for themselves, the group they could be hunting with, and the environment surrounding them, is vital.

I want to thank the committee for the opportunity to voice my concerns, and that of several others, with our viewpoint of the best means of safety training.

Respectfully,



Rick Heisler

PO Box 341, Campbellsport WI 53010

Certified WDNR Hunter Safety Lead Instructor #12753

Wisconsin Hunter Safety Coalition Member

Hi Everyone!

My name is Lindsay Muench. I'm 26 years old and an avid outdoorsman. I currently live in Campbellsport, WI. In my free time when I am not working my full-time job, I enjoy hunting, fishing in our pontoon, playing wheelchair power soccer, watching my sister play softball, and spending time with family.

Growing up there were many uncertainties in my life. When I was 6 months old, I was diagnosed with a genetic neuromuscular disease called Spinal Muscular Atrophy. In short, SMA is a progressive muscle wasting disease similar to ALS. After I was diagnosed, the doctors told my parents I wouldn't live past the age of two (yeah, I've exceeded those expectations just a little bit). Because of the physical limitations of this disease, no one really knew what I might be able to accomplish in life. This uncertainty included hunting.

Both my parents started hunting when they were 12 years old. Some of my fondest childhood memories came from being packed up in the all-terrain stroller and joining them on their hunting adventures. Oh...the flat tires we encountered were fun for sure. I was unable to do physical tasks, unlike most kids my age, but these trips gave me the opportunity to experience the outdoors just like everyone else.

At a young age, I knew I wanted to do whatever it took to get the opportunity to hunt. When the registration came out for the in-person hunter's safety class in my town, I made sure to sign up. Was I nervous at first, oh for sure! I had no clue how the hunter's safety instructors were going to treat me. I wasn't strong enough to hold a gun or pull the trigger, two integral parts of hunting. All my worries were put aside thanks to the wonderful instructors I had, who treated me just like any other kid in the class.

That is why I am here today.

Beyond the fact that I was able to create lifelong friendships, the hands-on field training and in-person courses that I completed played dividends in my life. As a part of the hands-on learning, I was exposed to real world examples that a textbook does not provide. Did I learn what the different parts of the gun were after reading the hunter's safety book? Yes. But did I get the opportunity to demonstrate that I knew how to hold a gun properly from reading a book? Nope! Furthermore, did I truly understand the significance of knowing your target and what's beyond it and in front of it from a textbook? Well sure, I thought I did, but until you get the hands-on exposure and see firsthand how important target awareness is and how the bullets act after being fired, there is no way someone really understands this, especially adolescents.

At the end of my hunter's safety class, I graduated with high honors and was awarded the Ken Stuart Award. This award is given to a student who not only has a high exam score but understands the importance of the heritage of hunting. I was honored to be awarded this title. I had one of the highest exam scores in my class! Most kids would be ecstatic about that alone, but the exam score didn't hold much significance to me in the end. The valuable lessons I learned from hunter's safety were from the hands-on field

training and classroom instruction. Without the field training and classroom instruction, I would have never understood how to be an ethical, safe, and responsible hunter. It is the hunter's responsibility to make ethical decisions for other hunters, themselves, and nature. This is something a textbook never would have taught me.

Before the field training I received, the most responsibility I had was brushing my teeth, as do most young children. In no way was I prepared or mature enough to pass a hunter's safety class without the hands-on learning and instruction. To this day, I fully believe that if an adolescent doesn't experience hands on training in the classroom and in the field, they will miss out on the visual learning and real-world experiences. On top of that, they will never understand the ethical responsibilities they hold as hunters.

Fourteen years ago, I rolled into the Campbellsport Community Center as an eager 12-year-old excited to learn about hunting. What I did not know was that I would use the lessons taught during field training for the rest of my life, in the woods, and in my career. While in the woods, I am vigilant in proper gun handling and ethical hunting. Some of the critical practices I learned in field training I STILL use to this day include making sure the gun is unloaded after hunting, making sure we are using the proper ammo, and not taking a shot if I don't know what is beyond my target. In my career, as a human resources benefits coordinator, I exercise ethical practices day in and day out. I have witnessed how vital hands-on learning is while training co-workers for their role. Without physical trial and error, individuals don't comprehend many tasks. And mind you, these individuals I am training are adults, not adolescents.

In conclusion, as the hunter's safety instructor manual states, "The primary purpose of the safety program is to teach and train beginners to be safe, ethical and responsible in the recreational activity they choose." I fully believe by not requiring adolescents to participate in a hunter's safety in-person field training, we are not fulfilling this goal. I, as a newly appointed hunter's safety volunteer apprentice, civilian, and hunter thank you for listening to my story. It is my hope that after today you recognize the opportunities that hands on training provides to students. The passing of Senate Bill 265 promotes safe hunting practices to continue this great sport for generations to come. My story could have turned out a lot different had my field training instructors not accepted me and failed to teach me the fine sport of hunting. I had the passion for hunting, and they instilled the ethical and safe aspects of hunting during my hands on training. I am forever grateful for that opportunity.

Thank you.



FOND DU LAC COUNTY

SHERIFF

Ryan F. Waldschmidt
Sheriff

Kevin P. Galske
Chief Deputy

To: 2023 Senate Committee on Financial Institutions and Sporting Heritage
From: Fond du Lac County Sheriff Ryan F. Waldschmidt
Date: 08-23-2023
Subject: Support of Senate Bill 265

Greetings,

Today I appear before this committee as both Fond du Lac County Sheriff Ryan Waldschmidt, as well as Wisconsin resident hunter Ryan Waldschmidt, and I appear before you in support of Senate Bill 265.

Hunting laws and concepts, safety rules and regulations, ethical practices, and other hunting related topics can effectively be relayed to a student both online or in person, and this bill allows for either option to complete the classroom portion of the course. I myself am a graduate of an in-person Wisconsin Hunter Safety course, and I know many others who have successfully completed both in-person or online programs.

I'm here today to specifically address the portion of the bill that would require attendance of an in-person field training session for those under the age of 18. Laws, rules, concepts, ethical practices...all those things I just mentioned a moment ago can effectively be taught through in person or online instruction. However, the safe handling and firing of a firearm cannot be replicated online. The physical act of handling, pointing, and ultimately pulling the trigger of a firearm comes with tremendous responsibility, and we all know that the consequences of dangerous or reckless handling of a firearm can be deadly. The safest way to prepare our youth for the great responsibility that comes with handling a firearm is through in person instruction by trained and certified hunter safety professionals on a controlled range environment. Some youth will attend range day with plenty of prior experience handling a firearm, and for them, it will be just another day on the range. Others will attend range day and pull the trigger of a firearm for the first time in their life. Some youth are mentored in the field by safety conscious and experienced adult hunters, but some youth, unfortunately, are mentored in the field by unsafe or inexperienced adult hunters. Under any of these circumstances, mandatory attendance at a range day ensures every youth hunter, regardless of experience or mentorship, is educated and vetted by qualified professional instructors who are training a robust and detailed curriculum. This helps ensure our youth hit the woods with the confidence they need to participate in a safe, and if all goes well, successful hunt.

As a 25 year veteran of law enforcement, I've seen first-hand the consequences of reckless handling of a firearm. Requiring a youth hunter to attend one day of range training helps set them up for a lifetime of safe hunting. I strongly encourage this committee promote practices that helps ensure our next generation of Wisconsin hunters hits the woods with some of the best hands-on training they can receive, and I respectfully ask you to join me in support of this bill.

Ryan F. Waldschmidt, Sheriff
Fond du Lac County

08-23-2023

TESTIMONY IN FAVOR OF SENATE BILL 265

Re: Proposed SB 265 – Hunter Education requirements for persons under the age of 18

In Favor

My name is John J. Plenke, N103W14992 Windsong Cir. E, Germantown, WI 53022

I am a retired DNR Warden (2010), with 31 plus years of service, 18 of those years as a Recreational Safety Warden (RSW), in the busy Southeast Region of the state. During that time as an RSW I served as a mentor and a trainer of over 700 volunteer instructors in 8 Southeast counties. (Local Wardens in each county were also involved in that process.) I have been teaching Hunter Education for over 43 years. Currently I am the Chairman of the Wisconsin Hunter Education Coalition; a group of professional people, retired Wardens and administrators, which has been working collaboratively with the DNR.

The volunteer DNR instructors, who are the backbone of the program, are the starting point for many first time hunters, especially youth, in the classes they put on throughout Wisconsin. Their role, in a nutshell, is to help save lives, prevent injuries, network with people in their local communities and to positively influence the attitude and actions of the new hunters that they teach.

Over the years, the program of instruction has evolved in meeting the demands of the public, while maintaining the high standards it has always followed. These changes have made it more accessible to the students and easier to teach for the volunteers delivering it.

Along those lines the DNR has a course curriculum, focused on getting the students up and out of their seats and going through a series of practical hands-on training scenarios. This consistent level of instructing, with specific lesson plans for each section of the in-person course, has contributed to a more effective, streamlined program. The volunteers are trained and given the appropriate equipment to deliver these all important lessons to their students.

Every program taught in the state emphasizes the 4 basic rules of firearms safety. You cannot pass the class until you demonstrate to the instructors that you mastered the concept of what they are and how to apply them. Those rules are T – treat every firearm as if it were loaded, A – Always point the muzzle in a safe direction, B – Be certain of your target and what is in front of it and beyond it, and K- Keep your finger off the trigger guard until you are ready to fire.

Years ago when Wisconsin took over the program from the NRA, it was an all-inclusive program that taught everything from gutting and butchering a deer, hunting over dogs, basic first aid, and land management. Many of those courses, in the 70's, 80's and a few in the 90's, were over 20 hours long. Today the program's main focus is almost entirely on firearms safety.

The average traditional course taught now, with the emphasis on learning TAB-k, putting the firearms in the student's hands, along with a tree stand safety component, is presently at 13 hours per course, with

each course averaging 4-5 sessions long. The internet field day covers all the safety lessons, with a certification exam at the end of it, averages 6-7 hours long.

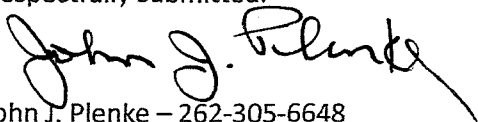
With that being said, the public does have opportunities to get their children into a course if they properly plan ahead of time for the course. And if they are unable to they have the option of going the mentored hunting route until they can fit a class offering into their schedule.

In closing the DNR and it's staff, partnering with various NGO's, are working together to support and grow the existing volunteer instructor corps, that can make this an even more successful program.

The Wisconsin public has grown accustomed to and expects to have trained and safe hunters in the field, as they partake in Wisconsin's hunting seasons. That is a tradition we cannot afford to lose.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak with you today.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John J. Plenke". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

John J. Plenke – 262-305-6648



WISCONSIN WILDLIFE FEDERATION

213 North Main Street, Suite 100, PO Box 460; Poynette, WI 53955 • (608) 635-0600 • (800) 897-4161
www.wiwf.org

AFFILIATED WITH THE NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION

President:

Keryn Quamme

W6970 Hwy B

Dalton, WI 53926

608-209-3872

keynabc@gmail.com

August 23, 2023

Senate Bill 265---In-field Hunter Education Training; Senate Sporting Heritage Committee

First Vice President:

Connie Polzin

6771 Firetower Rd

Rhineland, WI 54501

715-360-3903

noisycreek71@gmail.com

Dear Chair Stafsholt and Sporting Heritage Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and allow the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation to indicate its strong support for Senate Bill 265 which provides that the Department of Natural Resources shall require new hunters under the age of 18 to attend an in-field training session as a part of the process of obtaining a hunter education certification.

Second Vice President:

Terri Roehrig

5588 County Rd H

Mondovi, WI 54755

920-540-2775

troehrig@yahoo.com

The Federation is the state's largest hunting, fishing and trapping organization with a membership of 220 affiliate sports clubs throughout Wisconsin. A large majority of those clubs are involved in Hunter Education training programs, many hosting in-field training sessions as part of their program. The Wisconsin Hunter Education Instructors Association is one of the highly valued state-wide affiliate members of the Federation. A large number of the Federation's 52-member Board of Directors are or have been hunter education instructors. There is overwhelming support for in-field training sessions by the Federation's many affiliate sports clubs.

Treasurer:

David Verhage

1111 Chadwick Ct.

Plover, WI 54467

715-344-3497

DavidDebiV@charter.net

I personally have been a life-long hunter and have served as a hunter education instructor. From my experience as an instructor, I can verify that many of the new hunters in the hunter education program have little or in some cases no exposure to the handling and discharge of firearms. That is likely a reflection of the demographics and backgrounds of today's families. The lack of exposure to the safe handling of firearms poses a safety risk for a young hunter, their hunting party, other hunters and other individuals located near their hunt. It also can be a mental barrier for a new hunter to engage or otherwise continue in the sport of hunting.

Secretary:

Shannon Haley

3364 Port Rd.

Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495

414-803-6828

smxhaley27@gmail.com

The Federation would like to especially thank Senator Stroebel and Representative Bodden for being the leading sponsors of the bill as well as the many other Senators and Representatives that have signed on as co-sponsors. We urge the Committee to approve Senate Bill 265 in the near future and forward it to the full Senate for passage.

Past President:

Pat Quaintance

88255 Happy Hollow Rd

Bayfield, WI 57814

715-209-1799

pquaint@icloud.com

Thank you again for this opportunity.

Interim Executive Director:

Jack Nissen

262-370-8154

jack@wiwf.org

Director of Development

& Field Operations:

Cody Kamrowski

715-896-5445

cody@wiwf.org

Business Manager:

Lindsay Alt

PO Box 460

Poynette, WI 53955

608-635-0600

lindsay@wiwf.org

Sincerely yours,

Keryn Quamme

Keryn Quamme

President



Ray Anderson <randersw@gmail.com>

Please Support Senate Bill 265

Ray Anderson <randersw@gmail.com>

Tue, Aug 22, 2023 at 3:41 PM

To: Sen.Stafsholt@legis.wisconsin.gov, Sen.Felzkowski@legis.wisconsin.gov, Sen.Tomczyk@legis.wisconsin.gov, "Sen.Spreitzer" <Sen.Spreitzer@legis.wisconsin.gov>, Sen.Hesselbein@legis.wisconsin.gov

Cc: Sharlene.Konkel@legis.wisconsin.gov, Anna.Henning@legis.wisconsin.gov, Dan.Schmidt@legis.wisconsin.gov

Senator Stafsholt, Committee Chair and Sporting Heritage Committee Members

I am requesting your support of Senate Bill 265.

I grew up in a hunting family with parents that stressed the importance of firearm safety. Having been born before 1973 and having served in the military I didn't have to take Hunter Ed to be hunter certified. I took Hunter Ed Safety in 2003 to be certified to hunt out West. I found the class to be so important that I immediately applied for and passed the certification process to become a Hunter Education instructor.

As an instructor I am constantly approached by non-hunters and parents of kids in my classes stressing the importance of hands-on training and that their kids pass the test to ensure they fully grasp the importance of safe firearm handling. Parents point out that being taught by trained instructors is extremely important and that most kids can't fully appreciate and understand the responsibility of safely handling a firearm by only taking an online class - handling a firearm and hunting is "not" a video game.

Many parents point out how important it is for their kids to hear and learn from someone other than them, the parent. They also state that the Hunter Ed Safety training we instructors teach today is an improvement from when they took the class. We have structured lesson plans to ensure that all students receive the same information and high-quality training.

Again, I continue to hear from non-hunters and parents who stress how important it is that our youth receive proper hands-on firearm safety training. They repeatedly tell me that "online training only" is not a substitute.

Thank you in advance for your support to move SB 265 forward to become law.

Ray Anderson – Wisconsin Hunter Education Coalition Member
2987 Osmundsen Rd, Fitchburg, WI 53711
(608) 698-9086
randersw@gmail.com