

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee

Griffin Roberge 271-2878

HB 1286, relative to fishing and hunting licenses for permanently disabled veterans.

Hearing Date: March 27, 2018.

Time Opened: 9:35 a.m.

Time Closed: 9:42 a.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Avard, Bradley, Innis, Fuller Clark and Feltes.

Members of the Committee Absent: None.

Bill Analysis: This bill permits the executive director of fish and game to issue a lifetime license to a permanently disabled veteran for one-half the cost of a lifetime license.

Sponsors:

Rep. Spillane
Sen. Avard

Rep. Verville
Sen. French

Rep. McGuire

Who supports the bill: Representative James Spillane (Rockingham - District 2), Senator Harold French (District 7), Representative Robert L'Heureux (Hillsborough - District 21), Representative James Webb (Rockingham - District 6), Representative Edith Tucker (Coos - District 5), Representative James McConnell (Cheshire - District 12), Representative Raymond Howard (Belknap - District 8), Representative Mariellen MacKay (Hillsborough - District 30), Representative Linda Gould (Hillsborough - District 7), Representative Jeanine Notter (Hillsborough - District 21), Representative Michael Vose (Rockingham - District 9), Representative Joseph Pitre (Strafford - District 2), Paul Sanderson (NH Fish & Game), Kevin Grady (State Veterans Advisory Committee).

Who opposes the bill: None.

Who is neutral on the bill: None.

Summary of testimony presented in support:

Representative James Spillane
Rockingham - District 2

- HB 1286 offers a discount on hunting and fishing licenses for NH veterans between 80-99% disabled. The NH Fish & Game Department currently offers a complementary lifetime hunting and fishing license to a 100% disabled veteran, leaving the rest to pay full price. That offer also existed for ME and VT disabled veterans.
- HB 1286 as introduced offered a free hunting and fishing license to a veteran that was 80-99%

disabled. That would have had a negative fiscal impact on NH Fish & Game. After working with the department, HB 1286-FN was amended to have a 50% discount on a lifetime hunting and fishing license for those 80-99% disabled and it excluded the reciprocity with ME and VT.

- Senator Fuller Clark asked what would have been the financial impact if there was a free license given to 80-99% disabled veterans.
 - Representative Spillane said the numbers were not concrete. The VA does not release statistics for those who are disabled within a certain range.
 - The monies that come from lifetime hunting and fishing licenses do not affect the department's yearly budget. When one buys a license, the revenues go into a trust fund. Every year, depending on the number of lifetime fishing and hunting licenses that exist, the department receives a stipend from the trust fund. Increasing the number of free lifetime licenses would decrease the revenues going into the trust fund.
 - By offering a 50% discount to 80-99% disabled veterans, HB 1286 will entice more veterans to purchase licenses.
- Senator Fuller Clark asked if there were any discussions in the House about making the lifetime hunting and fishing license for veterans free.
 - Representative Spillane said no conversations took place after the amendment was introduced. Representative Spillane worked with the NH Fish & Game Department on the amendment so that it would not have a negative financial impact to the department.

Kevin Grady

Air Force Association, representing the NH State Veterans Advisory Committee (SVAC)

- HB 1286 has a minimal fiscal impact to the NH Fish & Game Department and offers opportunities to NH veterans. HB 1286 as introduced would have had a serious fiscal impact.

Summary of testimony presented in opposition: None.

Neutral Information Presented: None.

Future Action: Ought to Pass.

GJR

Date Hearing Report completed: March 27, 2018.