

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: HB 819 Hunter Safety Course Requirements
SPONSOR(S): Kendrick
TIED BILLS: **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:**

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR
1) Environment & Natural Resources Council		Palmer	Zeiler
2) Policy & Budget Council			
3) _____			
4) _____			
5) _____			

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

The bill provides that a resident of Florida born on or after June 1, 1975, who is an active duty member of the United States Armed Forces, the United States Armed Forces Reserves, the National Guard, the United States Coast Guard, or the United States Coast Guard Reserve, upon submission of a valid military identification card, may satisfy the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission’s (FWC) hunter safety course requirements by successfully completing an online military hunter safety course or a hunter safety workbook and written test provided by the FWC.

The bill does not appear to have a significant fiscal impact on state or local governments.

The bill would become effective on July 1, 2008.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. HOUSE PRINCIPLES ANALYSIS:

Safeguard Individual Liberties: This bill provides that individuals who, as a result of their military training, are well versed in the use of firearms and firearm safety an additional option to satisfy FWC's hunting license hunter safety course requirements.

B. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Present Situation

In accordance with s. 372.5717, F. S., the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) has instituted and coordinates a statewide hunter safety course that is offered in every county. Instruction is provided by FWC staff and approved volunteers. The hunter safety course covers the knowledge, skills and attitude needed to be a safe hunter, and includes, but is not limited to, instruction in the competent and safe handling of firearms, conservation, and hunting ethics. The traditional course requires twelve hours of classroom instruction, a written exam and three hours of hands-on instruction at a shooting range.¹ The twelve hour classroom requirement may be completed by way of an alternative on-line study course with a four hour classroom segment.² The FWC issues a permanent hunter safety certification card to each person who has attended and successfully completed the hunter safety course.

To be issued a license to take wild animal life in Florida with the use of a firearm, gun, bow, or crossbow, any person born on or after June 1, 1975, must have a FWC issued, permanent hunter safety certification card or have a hunter safety certification card issued by a wildlife agency of another state, or any Canadian province, which shows that the holder of the card has successfully completed a hunter safety course approved by FWC. The FWC is currently working with other states to develop a revised hunter safety course that would be used by all the participating states.³

The FWC hunter safety course is offered without charge to the participants.

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill provides that a resident of Florida born on or after June 1, 1975, who is an active duty member of the United States Armed Forces, the United States Armed Forces Reserves, the National Guard, the United States Coast Guard, or the United States Coast Guard Reserve, upon submission of a valid military identification card, rather than attending a FWC hunter safety course, may satisfy the course requirements by successfully completing an online military hunter safety course or a hunter safety workbook and written test provided by the FWC. This course would differ from the traditional course in that the three hour shooting range requirement of the traditional course is not required.⁴

FWC will utilize current hunter safety course materials.⁵

¹ <http://myfwc.com/huntered/program.htm>

² Id.

³ FWC, 2008. Personal communication with Nick Wiley, Director, Division of Hunting and Game Management.

⁴ Id.

⁵ Id.

C. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1: Creates s. 372.5717(2)(c), F.S., relating to hunter safety course requirements.

Section 2: Creates an effective date of July 1, 2008.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

The hunter safety course program is funded by a federal grant and uses no state funds.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

Not applicable because this bill does not appear to require cities or counties to spend funds or take actions requiring the expenditure of funds, nor does it appear to reduce the authority that cities or counties have to raise revenues in the aggregate, nor does it appear to reduce the percentage of a state tax shared with cities or counties

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

No rulemaking authority is granted to implement the provisions of this bill.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

D. STATEMENT OF THE SPONSOR

This legislation is a way to honor our current military personnel and show them our appreciation for their dedication and service to our State. We understand their training and abilities with regard to handling firearms responsibly and feel it is a disservice to require they have additional shooting range time in order to enjoy the hunting resources available to them on public and private lands in Florida.

IV. AMENDMENTS/COUNCIL SUBSTITUTE CHANGES