



Attn: Members of Ohio Legislature
Re: House Bill 33, Sec. 1531.01 – College Student Hunting and Angling Licenses
Date: June 7, 2023
Position: Support

Honorable Members of the Ohio Legislature,

I write to you on behalf of the Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation in support of the proposed change made by House Bill 33, the 2024-25 appropriations bill, to Section 1531.01 of the Ohio Revised Code. This change would incorporate full-time students that reside in Ohio and are enrolled in an Ohio public or private college or university into the definition of “resident” for the purpose of obtaining a license to take fish or wildlife in the state. This proposed definition of “resident” is intended to increase participation in our time-honored outdoor traditions for a subset of sportsmen and women, college students, that are especially prone to being restricted from hunting and fishing due to the financial realities associated with higher education. Encouraging increased hunting and fishing participation among college students will benefit not only those students, but the conservation efforts of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR). I respectfully request that you support the inclusion of this language into the appropriations bill.

Founded in 1989, the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF) is the informed authority across outdoor issues and serves as the primary conduit for influencing public policy. Working with the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus (CSC), the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus (GSC), and the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses (NASC), CSF gives a voice to hunters, anglers, recreational shooters, and trappers on Capitol Hill and throughout state capitols advocating on vital outdoor issues that are the backbone of our nation's conservation legacy.

Including full-time college students within the definition of a resident for the purposes of obtaining a hunting or fishing license encourages their participation in these outdoor pursuits. Given the costs that students incur attending a school outside of their original home state, they are often unable to afford non-resident hunting and angling licenses, which results in lower participation rates among this key demographic of sportsmen and women across the country.

Because of these lower hunting and angling participation rates, fish and wildlife management agencies like the ODNR receive less funding to carry out its mission of conserving fish and wildlife populations. The ODNR derives a significant portion of its operating budget from to the sale of hunting and fishing licenses, along with excise taxes on outdoor goods, through the unique “user

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pays – public benefits” structure of the American System of Conservation Funding. Encouraging the college-age demographic to participate in hunting and fishing by removing cost-prohibitive barriers is likely to increase the number of licenses sold in the state, as well as the gear purchased by these hunters and anglers, benefitting both the ODNR and local economies.

Including this language in House Bill 33 is likely to increase participation of a crucial age demographic of hunters and anglers, benefiting not only those students, but the ODNR and the fish and wildlife populations that this agency manages. 29 states offer reduced cost non-resident college student hunting and fishing licenses¹, and I respectfully request that you support this updated definition of “resident” for the purposes of obtaining a hunting or fishing license in Ohio and welcome any questions that you may have.

Sincerely,



Robert Matthews

Senior Coordinator, Great Lakes States

Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation

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¹ “College Student Hunting/Angling Licenses,” *Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation*, Accessed May 31, 2023, <https://congressionalsportsmen.org/policy/college-student-hunting-angling-licenses/>