



February 27, 2026

Representative Mark White
Chairman, House Education Committee
425 Rep. John Lewis Way N
Suite 624 Cordell Hull Building
Nashville, TN 37243

Re: House Bill 2588; Hunting Safety in Grades Five Through Twelve

Position: Support

Dear Chairman White and Members of the House Education Committee,

On behalf of the undersigned conservation organizations, we write to express our support of House Bill 2588 which would offer students in grades five through twelve (5 – 12) a hunter education course as part of their physical education, health, or safety instruction curriculum. Additionally, the course must be approved by the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA).

In a world that is becoming increasingly digitized and distant from nature, opportunities to participate in activities that get young people outdoors are pivotal to ensuring the health and well-being of Tennessee's youth. Students in grades five through twelve are in very transformative years and providing them with education on hunter safety as well as the role that hunters play in wildlife conservation is essential to the continuation of our shared outdoor traditions.

Furthermore, participation in hunting has generally been on the decline for years now. Efforts to bring voluntary hunting safety education classes into the classroom would bolster hunter recruitment, retention, and reactivation (R3) efforts. Introduction to hunting and the shooting sports through a controlled and well-developed curriculum will teach students valuable traits like discipline and patience all while fostering lifelong memories with family and friends. These efforts are critical to ensuring the future of conservation funding through the "user pays – public benefits"

structure of the American System of Conservation Funding. In 2023 alone, Tennessee’s sportsmen and women generated \$78.4 million in conservation funding through the ASCF, which further highlights the importance of ensuring the next generation of conservationists.¹ As today’s sportsmen and women either age out or choose to no longer participate, they take their critical conservation dollars with them, leaving a funding gap to be filled.

By allowing schools to offer courses in hunting safety education, students will receive instruction and guidance from a TWRA-approved course and instructor and obtain the knowledge and experience needed to participate in our shared sporting heritage. Upon successful completion of the course, students will be well equipped to get outdoors and participate in our time-honored traditions where they will hopefully spark a passion that will carry with them for the rest of their lives.

In closing, to help conserve Tennessee’s storied traditions for generations to come, we respectfully encourage you to support House Bill 2588. Thank you for considering our comments, and please let us know if you would like additional information.

Sincerely,

Archery Trade Association
Boone and Crockett Club
Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation
Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports
Dallas Safari Club
Delta Waterfowl
Ducks Unlimited
National Deer Association
National Rifle Association
National Shooting Sports Foundation
National Wild Turkey Federation
Pheasants Forever
Pope and Young
Quail Forever
Ruffed Grouse Society/American Woodcock Society
Safari Club International
Tennessee Wildlife Federation
The Origins Foundation

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