

CONGRESSIONAL  
**SPORTSMEN'S**  
FOUNDATION

**To:** **Honorable Daruis J. Brown**  
Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee  
411 Legislative Avenue  
Dover, DE 19901

**Re:** **House Substitute 1 for House Bill 427 – Hunter Age Restriction Repeal**

**Position:** **Support**

**Date:** **6/24/2026**

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Chair Brown, Vice Chair Townsend, and Honorable Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

As the Manager, Mid-Atlantic States for the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF), I respectfully urge a favorable vote on House Substitute 1 (HS 1) for House Bill 427 (HB 427). The passage of this legislation will establish that individuals aged 16 to 17 may possess a BB gun or projectile weapon while hunting without the direct supervision of a person 21 years or older, provided they have completed a Delaware approved Basic Hunter Education Course and are in possession of a valid digital or physical Delaware adult hunting license issued by the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC). Additionally, this legislation will enable individuals aged 16 to 17 to possess a BB gun or projectile weapon while engaging in target practice without the direct supervision of a person 21 years or older if they completed the abovementioned hunter's safety course and have parental or guardian permission but however, are not required to purchase and possess a hunting license.

Founded in 1989, 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 capitals advocating on vital outdoor issues that are the backbone of our nation's conservation legacy.

The passage of this legislation furthers the recruitment and retention of our up and coming hunters and recreational shooters as it will permit hunters ages 16 to 17, with a parent or legal guardian's knowledge and permission, along with the successful completion of a Delaware approved Basic Hunter Education Course, to possess a projectile weapon while engaging in lawful hunting as long as they are in possession of a valid Delaware hunting license. This is currently allowed in Delaware's neighboring states of Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania if the hunter has successfully completed their respective state's hunter safety course and possesses the correct hunting license(s).

Additionally, this legislation will enable individuals aged 16 to 17 to possess a BB gun or projectile

weapon while performing target practice without the direct supervision of a person 21 years or older if they completed the abovementioned hunter's safety course and have parental or guardian permission but however, are not required to purchase and possess a hunting license.

Ensuring the recruitment and retention of our next generation of sportsmen and women is critical to maintaining and enhancing conservation funding. For example, 65% of DNREC's budget is comprised of sportsmen and women generated dollars through the [American System of Conservation Funding](#), which is a "user pays – public benefits" system. Additionally, in 2025 alone, Delaware had 98,491 certified hunting and fishing license holders which contributed \$2,968,489 in license sales, producing \$9,506,636 in federal match dollars, totaling over \$12.5M for conservation in the First State.

In closing, the passage of HS 1 for HB 427 will allow up and coming sportsmen and women the ability to continue to safely recreationally shoot and hunt without overburdensome restrictions which is vital for the continued recruitment and retention of our conservationists in the First State. For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable vote on House Bill 427.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kaleigh E. Leager". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kaleigh E. Leager  
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