

CONGRESSIONAL
SPORTSMEN'S
FOUNDATION

To: **Honorable Matt Meyer**
Governor of Delaware
150 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. South
Tatnall Building
Dover, DE 19901

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

Position: **Support**

Date: **7/27/2026**

Dear Governor Meyer,

My name is Kaleigh Leager, and I am the Manager, Mid-Atlantic States for the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation. First, I would like to thank you for your membership in the bipartisan Governor's Sportsmen's Caucus (GSC) and for your continued support of the sportsmen and women of the "First State". I write to you today respectfully requesting the enactment of House Substitute 1 (HS 1) for House Bill 427 (HB 427), legislation that if enacted 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).

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 enactment of this legislation furthers the recruitment and retention of our up-and-coming hunters, 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 (which includes a strenuous focus on firearm safety and responsibility) 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 hunter safety course and possesses the correct hunting license(s).

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Taking steps to facilitate 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 enactment of HS 1 for HB 427 will allow maturing sportsmen and women the ability to safely participate in time honored traditions and directly contribute to the conservation of Delaware's cherished natural resources and landscapes, without overburdensome restrictions. This is vital for the continued recruitment and retention of our conservationist community in the First State. For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to enact House Substitute 1 for House Bill 427.

Sincerely,



Kaleigh E. Leager
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