

HB 2456
An Act Relating to Lifetime Combination Hunting and Fishing Licenses for Children age 0-5
To
The Senate Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources

By Brad Loveless, Secretary
Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks

March 7, 2022

HB 2456 seeks to create a \$300 lifetime combination hunting and fishing license that would be available for children ages five (5) and under. **The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) is neutral to the provisions currently contained within the bill and would request a minor amendment.**

House Floor Amendments: Future Financial Risk/Benefit

House members who advocated for the original version of the bill worked with KDWP to adopt amendments to increase the license cost from \$200 to \$300. This increase will, at least for now, allow KDWP to claim federal aid funds. It is not known whether KDWP will have the ability to qualify for federal aid in the future with a lifetime license of \$300. Additional House Floor amendments granted KDWP the ability to increase the lifetime license fee from \$300 to \$400 after approximately five years and to terminate the program after 10 years. These changes will give KDWP time to analyze the program's success and could ensure KDWP's financial footing in outyears.

Request for Minor Amendment

KDWP would request a minor amendment to the implementation date of HB 2456. The bill would require the issuance of youth licenses upon publication in the register. KDWP is currently undergoing updating to its license software system and will be required to implement rules and regulations governing the issuance of lifetime licenses to youth. For these reasons, KDWP respectfully requests the start date for the issuance of such licenses to be set on January 1, 2023.

Barriers to Attracting New Hunters & Anglers

To its credit, HB 2456 focuses on removing a cost barrier in an effort to attract more youth to become new hunters and anglers. Although cost is a barrier, it is typically in reference to the startup costs associated with outdoor gear and access to ground for hunting.

Other barriers are not addressed by HB 2456, such as access, not knowing where to go and not having someone to go with, mentorship/social support, and someone who can help them develop basic skills and introduce them to outdoor opportunities. By utilizing the financial resources available to it, KDWP has developed programs and focused efforts to break down these barriers.

KDWP is Recruiting New Hunters & Anglers

KDWP's staff vigorously works to preserve Kansas' hunting heritage and conservation efforts. Recruiting new hunters and anglers is vitally important to preserving the input that outdoor recreation makes to the Kansas economy and maintaining the conservation and recreation programs Kansans enjoy today. KDWP has been actively involved in recruiting, retaining, and reactivating hunters and anglers (R3) and currently has several youth programs vital to this mission, such as:

- **Student Air Rifle Program**
- **Hunter Education in the Schools**
- **National Archery in the Schools**
- **Traditional hunter education courses, and**
- **Aquatic Education**

Recruitment and outreach efforts also must include efforts targeted at adults, because they often times provide the mentorship and social support necessary for new hunters and anglers to participate. Programs that provide opportunities for adults and youth new to hunting and fishing include:

- **KDWP Sponsored Mentored Hunts**
- **Becoming an Outdoors Woman Program**
- **KDWP Sponsored Special Hunts**

Additionally, KDWP is in the process of developing a comprehensive R3 Action Plan to guide future recruitment efforts and enhance the success of its programs.

Future Directions

KDWP would welcome the opportunity in the future to provide more detailed informational briefings to the Committee and discuss current and future efforts to recruit new hunters and anglers, retain the outdoor enthusiasts we currently have, and reactivate those who may have participated in the past.