

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2017 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
Enrolled - Revised

Senate Bill 46

(Senator Simonaire, *et al.*)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Environment and Transportation

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Hunting and Fishing Licenses - Active Military, Former Prisoners of War,  
Recipients of the Purple Heart Award, and Disabled Veterans

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This bill authorizes the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to extend complimentary fishing privileges already available to a Maryland resident who is a former prisoner of war or 100% service-connected disabled American veteran to specified, similar individuals from outside the State. The bill makes similar existing complimentary hunting privileges subject to competency in firearms and hunter safety requirements. The bill also requires that discounted fishing and hunting privileges be made available to Maryland residents who are recipients of the Purple Heart award and establishes a reporting requirement for DNR.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2017, and terminates June 30, 2020.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Special fund revenues decrease from FY 2018 through 2020 as a result of issuing discounted licenses, stamps, and permits to recipients of the Purple Heart award. The extent of any such decrease cannot be reliably estimated. However, *for illustrative purposes*, special fund revenues may decrease by between \$10,000 and \$20,000 for every 1,000 discounted licenses issued, not accounting for foregone special fund revenues from associated stamps and permits. Expenditures are not affected; DNR can implement the bill with existing resources.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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## Analysis

**Bill Summary:** The bill authorizes DNR to issue a lifetime complimentary angler's or sport fishing license to an out-of-state former prisoner of war or 100% service-connected disabled American veteran if the person's state of residence extends similar, reciprocal privileges. Persons issued a lifetime complimentary angler's license under that authorization are also exempt from a requirement to purchase a trout stamp in order to fish or possess trout in certain areas. The bill makes existing authorizations for DNR to issue lifetime complimentary hunting licenses to Maryland resident and out-of-state former prisoners of war and 100% service-connected disabled American veterans subject to competency in firearms and hunter safety requirements.

DNR must implement programs to provide discounted angler's, sport fishing, and hunting licenses, and associated stamps and permits, to Maryland residents who are recipients of the Purple Heart award.

DNR must report to the Governor and the General Assembly, by December 31, 2019, on (1) the number of discounted licenses, stamps, and permits issued to recipients of the Purple Heart award under the bill; (2) the availability, in other states, of complimentary hunting and fishing licenses to Maryland residents who are former prisoners of war and 100% service-connected disabled American veterans; (3) the number of such licenses issued to Maryland residents; and (4) the number of complimentary hunting and fishing licenses issued by DNR to out-of-state former prisoners of war and 100% service-connected disabled American veterans.

**Current Law:** DNR is authorized to issue a lifetime complimentary angler's, Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing, or hunter's license to a Maryland resident who certifies that the resident is a former prisoner of war or a 100% service-connected disabled American veteran. The department, however, is only authorized to issue a lifetime complimentary *hunter's* license to an out-of-state person who certifies that they are a former prisoner of war or a 100% service-connected disabled American veteran, if the person's state of residence extends similar, reciprocal privileges.

A holder of a lifetime complimentary angler's license for former prisoners of war or 100% service-connected disabled American veterans is exempt from a requirement that a person obtain a trout stamp in addition to an angler's license in order to fish or possess trout in certain areas established by DNR by regulation.

Generally, a person may not procure a hunting license without producing a certificate of competency in firearms and hunter safety, unless the person held a hunting license prior to July 1, 1977.

Varying fees apply for DNR hunting and fishing licenses. The annual fees for resident hunting, angler's, and Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing licenses are \$24.50, \$20.50, and \$15.00, respectively. Lower fees apply to certain junior, senior, and short-term licenses. The fee for a trout stamp is \$5 for residents. The fees for residents for the most widely purchased hunting stamps and permits are generally between \$5 and \$10.

**State Fiscal Effect:** Special fund revenues decrease from fiscal 2018 through 2020 as a result of issuing discounted licenses, stamps, and permits to Maryland residents who are recipients of the Purple Heart award. The extent of any such decrease, however, cannot be reliably estimated at this time. Information is not readily available on the number of Purple Heart award recipients living in Maryland. In addition, the number of such recipients who seek to obtain a discounted license and any associated stamps or permits pursuant to the bill is unknown.

*For illustrative purposes,* assuming the discount on license fees is in the range of \$10 to \$20 per license, special fund revenues decrease by \$10,000 to \$20,000 for every 1,000 discounted licenses issued. A \$10 to \$20 discount is consistent with current differences between the fees for *regular* resident angler's, Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing, and hunter's licenses and the reduced fees for *junior, senior, and short-term* licenses of those types. This does not account for additional loss of revenue from discounted stamps or permits issued to those licensees. This illustrative example assumes that any discounted licenses are issued to persons that would have purchased a license in the absence of the bill. To the extent the discount itself generates additional license sales, the loss in revenues is less.

The hunting, angler's, and Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing license fees are deposited in the Wildlife Management and Protection Fund, Fisheries Management and Protection Fund, and Fisheries Research and Development Fund, respectively.

The authorizations for DNR to issue a lifetime complimentary angler's or sport fishing license to an out-of-state former prisoner of war or 100% service-connected disabled American veteran are not expected to materially impact license fee revenues. In implementing the existing authorization for hunter's licenses, the department has not learned of any state that extends similar privileges to Maryland residents.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** SB 225 of 2016, a similar bill, passed with amendments in the Senate and the House and had a conference committee appointed, but no further action was taken.

**Cross File:** Although designated as a cross file, HB 4 (Delegate Simonaire, *et al.* – Environment and Transportation) is not identical.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Natural Resources; Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs; Department of Legislative Services

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