

# SENATE BILL 588

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By: **Senator Simonaire**

Introduced and read first time: February 5, 2026

Assigned to: Education, Energy, and the Environment

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## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Natural Resources – Complimentary Fishing and Hunting Licenses – Alterations**

3 FOR the purpose of altering certain requirements and authorizations for the issuance of  
4 certain complimentary fishing and hunting licenses; requiring the Department of  
5 Natural Resources to compile certain statistics relating to complimentary hunting  
6 licenses at a certain time each year; and generally relating to complimentary hunting  
7 and fishing licenses.

8 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

9 Article – Natural Resources

10 Section 4–607(a)(1), 4–745(e), 4–1004.1(a) and (e)(2), 10–301(l), 10–301.3, and  
11 10–303

12 Annotated Code of Maryland

13 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

14 BY adding to

15 Article – Natural Resources

16 Section 4–1004.1(e)(4)

17 Annotated Code of Maryland

18 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

19 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
20 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

21 **Article – Natural Resources**

22 4–607.

23 (a) (1) The Department may issue annually a complimentary angler’s license  
24 to the President of the United States, the governor of any state, and any official **OR**

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



**ENFORCEMENT OFFICER** of the game and fish department of any other state **THAT**  
**RECIPROCALLY OFFERS A COMPLIMENTARY ANGLER'S LICENSE.**

4-745.

(e) (1) In this subsection, "former prisoner of war" means a person who, while  
an active service member, was forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by an enemy  
government or its agents, or a hostile force, during a period of armed conflict.

(2) The Department may issue a lifetime complimentary Chesapeake Bay  
and coastal sport fishing license to any Maryland resident who certifies that the resident  
is:

(i) A former prisoner of war;

(ii) An American veteran who the U.S. Department of Veterans  
Affairs determines is unemployable; or

(iii) A 100% service connected disabled American veteran.

(3) The Department may issue a lifetime complimentary Chesapeake Bay  
and coastal sport fishing license to an out-of-state person:

(i) Who certifies that the person is:

1. A former prisoner of war;

2. An American veteran who the U.S. Department of  
Veterans Affairs determines is unemployable; or

3. A 100% service connected disabled American veteran; and

(ii) Whose state of residence extends similar privileges to former  
prisoners of war, American veterans who the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
determines are unemployable, or 100% service connected disabled American veterans of  
this State.

(4) A complimentary Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing license is  
not transferable **AND SHALL BE ISSUED WITHOUT A FEE.**

(5) The Department may issue annually a complimentary Chesapeake Bay  
and coastal sport fishing license to the President of the United States, the governor of any  
state, and any official **OR ENFORCEMENT OFFICER** of the game and fish department of  
any other state **THAT RECIPROCALLY OFFERS A COMPLIMENTARY SPORT FISHING**  
**LICENSE.**

(6) Not more than 20 complimentary Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing licenses for each state other than Maryland shall be outstanding at any time.

4–1004.1.

(a) In this section, “former prisoner of war” means [an individual] **A PERSON** who, while [serving in the active military, naval, or air service of the United States] **AN ACTIVE SERVICE MEMBER**, was forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by an enemy government or its agents, or a hostile force, during a period of armed conflict.

(e) (2) (I) [The] **SUBJECT TO SUBPARAGRAPHS (II) AND (III) OF THIS PARAGRAPH, THE** Department [shall] **MAY** issue a **LIFETIME** complimentary recreational oyster license to [a]:

1. **A** resident of the State who certifies that the resident is:

[(i)] **A.** A former prisoner of war;

[(ii)] **B.** An American veteran who [is determined to be unemployable by] the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs **DETERMINES IS UNEMPLOYABLE; OR**

[(iii)] **C.** A 100% service–connected disabled American veteran; [or

(iv) Blind] **AND**

2. **ANY RESIDENT OF ANY OTHER STATE WHO CERTIFIES THAT THE PERSON IS:**

**A.** A FORMER PRISONER OF WAR;

**B.** AN AMERICAN VETERAN WHO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS DETERMINES IS UNEMPLOYABLE; OR

**C.** A 100% SERVICE–CONNECTED DISABLED AMERICAN VETERAN.

(II) **THE DEPARTMENT MAY ISSUE A LIFETIME COMPLIMENTARY RECREATIONAL OYSTER LICENSE UNDER SUBPARAGRAPH (I)2 OF THIS PARAGRAPH IF THE OTHER STATE EXTENDS RECIPROCAL PRIVILEGES TO FORMER PRISONERS OF WAR, AMERICAN VETERANS WHO THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS DETERMINES ARE UNEMPLOYABLE, OR 100% SERVICE–CONNECTED DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS.**

(III) A LIFETIME COMPLIMENTARY RECREATIONAL OYSTER LICENSE IS NOT TRANSFERRABLE AND SHALL BE ISSUED WITHOUT A FEE.

(IV) NOT MORE THAN 20 LIFETIME COMPLIMENTARY RECREATIONAL OYSTER LICENSES FOR EACH STATE OTHER THAN MARYLAND SHALL BE OUTSTANDING AT ANY TIME.

(4) THE DEPARTMENT MAY ISSUE AN ANNUAL COMPLIMENTARY RECREATIONAL OYSTER LICENSE WITHOUT A FEE TO A PERSON THAT IS BLIND, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THE PERSON IS OR IS NOT A RESIDENT OF THE STATE.

10-301.

(l) When the Department has adequate computer capability, the Department shall compile statistics after the close of the hunting season each year concerning [the]:

(1) THE sale of hunting licenses for the previous season, including the names, addresses, counties of residence, and ages of the persons who purchased the hunting licenses and the types of hunting licenses sold;

(2) THE NUMBER OF ANNUAL COMPLIMENTARY HUNTING LICENSES ISSUED FOR THE PREVIOUS SEASON, INCLUDING THE NAMES, OCCUPATIONS, AND STATES OF RESIDENCE OF THE PERSONS WHO WERE ISSUED THE ANNUAL COMPLIMENTARY HUNTING LICENSES;

(3) THE NUMBER OF LIFETIME COMPLIMENTARY HUNTING LICENSES ISSUED FOR THE PREVIOUS SEASON AND IN TOTAL, INCLUDING THE NAMES, ELIGIBILITY CATEGORIES, AND STATES OF RESIDENCE OF THE PERSONS WHO WERE ISSUED THE LIFETIME COMPLIMENTARY HUNTING LICENSES; AND

(4) THE TOTAL NUMBER OF HUNTING LICENSES THAT ARE NO LONGER ISSUED BY THE DEPARTMENT THAT REMAIN VALID.

10-301.3.

(a) There is a commemorative lifetime hunting license.

(b) The Department shall issue a limited number of commemorative lifetime hunting licenses to certain nonprofit organizations, consistent with eligibility criteria developed by the Department, until December 31, 2011.

(c) [Nonprofit organizations issued hunting licenses under this section may, in cooperation with the Department, market and sell the hunting licenses] **EXCEPT FOR THE**

1 **INITIAL SALE BY A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION, A COMMEMORATIVE LIFETIME**  
2 **HUNTING LICENSE IS NOT TRANSFERRABLE.**

3 (d) [All proceeds from sales of hunting licenses under this section shall be used  
4 by the Department to fund conservation law enforcement by the Natural Resources Police  
5 Force.

6 (e) The Department may adopt regulations to carry out the provisions of this  
7 section.

8 10–303.

9 (a) (1) The Department [annually] may issue **ANNUALLY** a complimentary  
10 hunting license to the President of the United States, the governor of any state, or [an]  
11 **ANY** official or [an] enforcement officer of the game and fish management agency of  
12 [another] **ANY OTHER** state which reciprocally offers complimentary hunting licenses.

13 (2) (i) Subject to the requirements of § 10–301.1 of this subtitle, the  
14 Department may issue a lifetime complimentary hunting license to a Maryland resident  
15 who certifies that the resident is:

- 16 1. A former prisoner of war;
- 17 2. An American veteran who the U.S. Department of  
18 Veterans Affairs determines is unemployable; or
- 19 3. A 100% service connected disabled American veteran.

20 (ii) Subject to the requirements of § 10–301.1 of this subtitle, the  
21 Department may issue a lifetime complimentary hunting license to an out-of-state person:

- 22 1. Who certifies that the person is:
- 23 A. A former prisoner of war;
- 24 B. An American veteran who the U.S. Department of  
25 Veterans Affairs determines is unemployable; or
- 26 C. A 100% service connected disabled American veteran; and
- 27 2. Whose state of residence extends similar privileges to  
28 former prisoners of war, American veterans who the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
29 determines are unemployable, or 100% service connected disabled American veterans of  
30 this State.

1                   (3)     A complimentary **HUNTING** license is not transferable **AND SHALL BE**  
2 **ISSUED WITHOUT A FEE.**

3                   (b)     For the purposes of this section, “former prisoner of war” means a person who,  
4 while an active service member, was forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by an  
5 enemy government or its agents, or a hostile force, during a period of armed conflict.

6                   (c)     **NOT MORE THAN 20 COMPLIMENTARY HUNTING LICENSES FOR EACH**  
7 **STATE OTHER THAN MARYLAND SHALL BE OUTSTANDING AT ANY TIME.**

8                   SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July  
9 1, 2026.