

# SENATE BILL 588

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6lr2005

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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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Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

Senate action: Adopted

Read second time: March 2, 2026

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## CHAPTER \_\_\_\_\_

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) and (b), 4–745(e), 4–1004.1(a) and (e)(2), 10–301(l), 10–301.3,  
11 and 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**

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EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



1 4-607.

2 (a) (1) The Department may issue annually a complimentary angler's license  
3 to the President of the United States, the governor of any state, and any official **OR**  
4 **ENFORCEMENT OFFICER** of the game and fish department of any other state **THAT**  
5 **RECIPROCALLY OFFERS A COMPLIMENTARY ANGLER'S LICENSE.**

6 (b) Not more than 20 complimentary angler's licenses ISSUED UNDER  
7 SUBSECTION (A)(1) OF THIS SECTION for each state other than Maryland shall be  
8 outstanding at any time.

9 4-745.

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

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

16 (i) A former prisoner of war;

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

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

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

22 (i) Who certifies that the person is:

23 1. A former prisoner of war;

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

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

27 (ii) Whose state of residence extends similar privileges to former  
28 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 (4) A complimentary Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport fishing license is  
 2 not transferable **AND SHALL BE ISSUED WITHOUT A FEE.**

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

8 (6) Not more than 20 complimentary Chesapeake Bay and coastal sport  
 9 fishing licenses **ISSUED UNDER PARAGRAPH (5) OF THIS SUBSECTION** for each state  
 10 other than Maryland shall be outstanding at any time.

11 4-1004.1.

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

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

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

20 [(i)] ~~A. 1.~~ **1.** A former prisoner of war;

21 [(ii)] ~~B. 2.~~ **2.** An American veteran who [is determined to be  
 22 unemployable by] the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs **DETERMINES IS**  
 23 **UNEMPLOYABLE; OR**

24 [(iii)] ~~C. 3.~~ **3.** A 100% service-connected disabled American veteran; [or

25 (iv) Blind] ~~AND~~

26 ~~2. ANY RESIDENT OF ANY OTHER STATE WHO CERTIFIES~~  
 27 ~~THAT THE PERSON IS:~~

28 ~~A. A FORMER PRISONER OF WAR;~~

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

~~C. A 100% SERVICE CONNECTED DISABLED AMERICAN VETERAN.~~

~~(H) 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.~~

~~(H) (II) 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:

(I) BLIND; AND

(II) 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



- 1                   A.     A former prisoner of war;
- 2                   B.     An American veteran who the U.S. Department of  
3 Veterans Affairs determines is unemployable; or
- 4                   C.     A 100% service connected disabled American veteran; and
- 5                   2.     Whose state of residence extends similar privileges to  
6 former prisoners of war, American veterans who the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
7 determines are unemployable, or 100% service connected disabled American veterans of  
8 this State.

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

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

14                  (c)     **NOT MORE THAN 20 COMPLIMENTARY HUNTING LICENSES ISSUED**  
15 **UNDER SUBSECTION (A)(1) OF THIS SECTION FOR EACH STATE OTHER THAN**  
16 **MARYLAND SHALL BE OUTSTANDING AT ANY TIME.**

17                  SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July  
18 1, 2026.

Approved:

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Governor.

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President of the Senate.

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Speaker of the House of Delegates.