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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

House Bill 236

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

Cross-file: SB 25

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House Environment and Transportation Committee – February 12, 2020

Good afternoon Chairman Barve, Vice Chair Stein and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to present **HB 236**. This is a simple bill that updates the current DNR Purple Heart Program.

In 2017, legislation was passed that asked DNR to create a discount for hunting and fishing licenses for Maryland Purple Heart recipients. They settled on a 50% discount. The 2017 legislation also:

- Clarified that a hunter safety course is required for those receiving the complementary licenses to be consistent with non-complimentary licenses.
- Provide reciprocal free fishing licenses - as we did already for hunting licenses - to out of state POWs and 100% disabled veterans, if the other state provided for Maryland POWs and 100% disabled veterans the same privileges.

I want to thank the Department of Natural Resources for their work to make this program successful, giving a benefit to those individuals who have given so much to our country.

This bill simply –

- removes the June 2020 sunset on the program, and
- removes the reporting requirement that was there to ensure DNR wouldn't be financially overwhelmed with the number of Purple Heart recipients requesting discounts.
 - In 2018, approximately 20 took advantage of the discount.
 - Last year, there were 48 that received the discount.

As the program becomes better known, the numbers may increase some but it is believe it is within DNR's ability to maintain the program. Additionally, they have the authority to modify the program if needed.

Goal is to help those who gave so much for the country.

I respectfully request a favorable vote for House Bill 236.