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SENATE BILL NO. 617

Offered January 9, 2008

Prefiled January 9, 2008

A BILL to amend and reenact § 29.1-300.1 of the Code of Virginia and to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 29.1-300.4, relating to establishing an apprentice hunting license.

 Patron—Stolle

 Referred to Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 29.1-300.1 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted and that the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 29.1-300.4 as follows:

§ 29.1-300.1. Certification of competence in hunter education.

A. Except as provided in subsection B of this section and § 29.1-300.4, no hunting license shall be issued to (i) a person who has never obtained a license to hunt in any state or country, or (ii) a person who is under the age of sixteen, unless such a person presents to the Board of Game and Inland Fisheries or one of its authorized license vendors, a certificate of completion in hunter education issued or authorized by the Board under the hunter education program, or proof that he holds the equivalent certificate obtained from an authorized agency or association of another state or country.

B. Although a resident under the age of twelve is not required to obtain a license to hunt, any person under the age of twelve, or an individual on his behalf, may purchase a Virginia hunting license or a junior lifetime hunting license pursuant to § 29.1-302.1, without completing a hunter education program as required in subsection A of this section, provided that no person under the age of twelve shall hunt unless accompanied and directly supervised by an adult who has, on his person, a valid Virginia hunting license. The junior lifetime hunting license issued to an individual under the age of twelve shall become invalid on the individual's twelfth birthday and remain invalid until certification of competence in hunter education is shown as provided in this section. A lifetime license, indicating the completion of hunter education or an equivalent certificate, shall be reissued at no cost when such proof is provided.

The adult shall be responsible for such supervision. For the purposes of this section, "adult" means the parent or legal guardian of the person under age twelve, or such person over the age of eighteen designated by the parent or legal guardian.

"Accompanied and directly supervised" means that the adult is within sight of the person under the age of twelve.

C. This section shall not apply to persons while on horseback hunting foxes with hounds but without firearms.

§ 29.1-300.4. Apprentice hunting license; deferral of hunter education.

A. There is hereby established an apprentice hunting license. The license shall be a one-time nonrenewable license that shall be valid for one year from the date of purchase and shall entitle the licensee to a one-time deferral of completion of hunter education required under § 29.1-300.1. The apprentice hunting licensee shall not hunt unless accompanied and directly supervised by an adult over the age of 18 who has, on his person, a valid Virginia hunting license. For the purposes of this section, "accompanied and directly supervised" occurs when a person over 18 maintains a close visual and verbal contact with, provides adequate direction to, and can immediately assume control of the firearm from the apprentice hunter. The cost of the license shall be \$10 for a resident and \$20 for a nonresident.

B. Possession of a valid apprentice hunting license shall serve in lieu of the state resident hunting or nonresident hunting license required under subdivision 2 and 3 of § 29.1-303, respectively. The purchase of any other hunting licenses shall be at the same cost as specified for residents or nonresidents in this title or as subsequently revised by the Board pursuant to subdivision 16 of § 29.1-103. The purchase of the apprentice hunting license shall not qualify the holder to purchase a regular hunting license or exempt the licensee from compliance with the requirements of this title and any regulations adopted by Department. Any previous holder of a state resident or nonresident hunting license issued under this title shall be prohibited from the purchase of an apprentice hunting license for himself.

C. The Board may adopt regulations to carry out the provisions of this section.

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