

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SB 5008

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Agriculture & Natural Resources

**Title:** An act relating to hunting licensing requirements for members of the military.

**Brief Description:** Regarding hunting licensing requirements for members of the military.

**Sponsors:** Senators Hewitt, Hobbs, Honeyford, Schoesler, Zarelli, Parlette, Stevens, Kilmer, Hatfield, Swecker, Benton and Roach.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Agriculture & Natural Resources: 3/17/09, 3/26/09 [DPA].

**Brief Summary of Bill  
(As Amended by House)**

- Exempts military personnel from the firearm skills portion of hunter's education course requirements.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Blake, Chair; Jacks, Vice Chair; Chandler, Ranking Minority Member; Smith, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Grant-Herriot, Kretz, McCoy, Nelson, Ormsby, Pearson, Van De Wege and Warnick.

**Minority Report:** Without recommendation. Signed by 1 member: Representative Liias.

**Staff:** Jason Callahan (786-7117)

**Background:**

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is responsible for the operation of a statewide hunter education program. This program, or an equivalent program in another state or Canadian province, must be completed by state hunting license applicants aged 37 years or younger.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

The hunter education program consists of at least 10 hours of instruction in safety, conservation, sportsmanship, and firearm handling. Average classes involve four to six sessions and require the student to pass a written test and demonstrate firearms handling skills. The WDFW offers a home study option or live courses scheduled throughout the state.

Hunter education courses are taught by volunteers, either individually or as a team, who are trained and certified by the WDFW. All instructors must be at least 21 years old and must undergo a background investigation by the WDFW.

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**Summary of Amended Bill:**

The WDFW is directed to exempt members of the United States military from the firearm skills portion of any course of instruction in hunter's education completed over the Internet.

**Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

The bill introduced to the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources exempted active duty members of the armed forces or the National Guard from all of the requirements of the hunter's education training course.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date of Amended Bill:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) None.

(With concerns) There is no intent to not support service members, but once one exception is carved out for one group, then is it hard to defend why other similarly situated groups do not enjoy the same exemption. There are a lot of ways that a member of the military can satisfy the hunter's education requirements. The WDFW accepts reciprocity from any other state or Canadian province and offers a one-year deferral from taking the instruction under certain circumstances. Internet courses and a one-day live course are also available.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** Mik Mikitik and Bruce Bjork, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.**