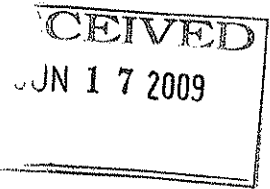


# W i s c o n s i n HUNTERS RIGHTS COALITION



Wisconsin Chapters of Safari Club International  
Wisconsin Bear Hunters' Association  
Wisconsin Chapter of National Wild Turkey Federation  
Hunters' Alliance for Regulatory Communication  
United States Sportsmen's Alliance  
Wisconsin Hunters' United  
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## MEMO of Support for SB 167

The Hunters Rights Coalition would like to strongly encourage your support for SB 167 the "Mentored Hunting Bill". We have made removing barriers to enjoying Wisconsin's hunting heritage our top priority. Currently Wisconsin is one of a handful of states that do not allow new hunters to try out hunting in an apprentice/mentor situation.

*This bill does NOT reduce the hunting age, but does create a new program for young and old alike to enjoy hunting for the first time with an experienced mentor. Currently you must be 12 years old, and have a hunter's safety certificate to hunt "accompanied" by an adult (within sight and sound) – this bill does not change that. Currently you must be 14 years old and have a hunter's safety certificate to hunt by yourself – this bill does not change that.*

In his testimony in support of the bill, DNR Chief Warden Randy Stark said,

"Hunting accident statistics nationwide suggest the safest combination of hunters are a youth and an adult together, and the least safest combination is two or more youth together without adult supervision. The mentoring opportunities proposed in SB 167 promote the safest combination – a youth closely supervised by an adult.

There are currently 41 states that have less restrictive conditions than current law in Wisconsin. Thirty-three (33) states have no minimum hunting age. A review of hunting incident statistics in other states **does not** support a hypothesis that hunting incident rates increase when 10 and 11 year old hunters become involved in hunting when supervised by an adult under the strict conditions outlined in this bill."

This bill does allow anyone, from 10 to 90, to start their hunting experience by accompanying an experienced mentor and by hunting within arm's length and with only one firearm between the mentor and the apprentice. This will allow young people the opportunity to learn to hunt the safe way – *mentored hunters are the safest hunters in the woods.*

This will also help to *recruit new hunters* into our family oriented outdoor sport. If every child has to wait until 12 to experience hunting, many will be lost to video games or other pursuits.

As Stark also said, "the recruitment of new hunters is an essential element to the continuation of wildlife management and conservation in the future. In terms of passing on the conservation ethic, research at Cornell University found that participation with "wild" nature, such as experienced in hunting, **before age 11** is a "particularly potent pathway" toward shaping both environmental attitudes and behaviors in adulthood."

Also, this bill gives the *new adult hunter* an opportunity to learn to hunt without first having to attend a class with 12 year olds. A fast growing segment of new hunters is the young adult, now settled down, working, and looking for an appropriate weekend sport.

27 states have recently passed similar laws – **adding over 284,000 new hunters to our sport.**

**The Hunting community is united behind this bill. We would appreciate your support for this common sense measure.**