

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Larry Powell at 9:00 a.m. on March 20, 2012, in Room 783 in the Docking State Office Building.

All members were present except:

Representative Michael Peterson (Unexcused)

Committee Staff Present:

Randy Gilliland, Kansas Legislative Research Department

Sean Ostrow, Office of the Revisor of Statutes

Chris Sevedge, Kansas Legislative Research Department

Joyce Hladky, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Robin Jennison, Secretary, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks

Jim Snyder, Speaker Pro-Tem, Kansas Silver-Haired Legislature

Others Attending:

Chairman Powell welcomed the Committee.

Chairman Powell opened the floor for hearings on **SB314 -- Eliminating the fishing and hunting license exemption for persons 65 years of age and older.**

Robin Jennison, Secretary, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, presented testimony in favor of **SB314**. **SB314** seeks to repeal exemptions for Kansas residents 65 years of age and older for the purchase of hunting and fishing licenses. The bill be would be effective January 1, 2013. The Department supports the provisions contained in the bill as amended by the Senate.

Mr. Jennison testified that as we discuss the issue of requiring hunting and fishing licenses for sportsmen and women age 65 and older, it is important to remember two things.

First, we are talking about \$11.50 for either annual license up to the age of 74. Seniors, 75 years of age and older, would be exempt from license purchase. An additional option for seniors would be a lifetime combination hunting and fishing pass that Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks has committed to be priced at \$40.00.

Second, the bill is not about taking anything away from seniors but it is instead about passing on Kansas outdoor traditions to our children and grandchildren.

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This timely issue is a result of two converging developments: the baby boomer generation, who are more likely to hunt and fish than other generations, has started to retire and we are living longer. With this fast increasing portion of our outdoor enthusiasts not paying license fees, and adjustment is overdue.

The goal of the department is to provide a quality outdoor experience for the most people at reasonable cost. With the changing demographics, paying for current fish and wildlife programs is putting more of a burden on young families than ever. These are the very people who need to get outdoors. There is a growing body of work to support the premise that an outdoor lifestyle is a healthy lifestyle, both physically and mentally. By making sure young families can afford to enjoy Kansas parks, hunting, and fishing, we are able to ensure their children will continue that tradition when they are adults. (Attachment 1)

Mr. Jennison answered questions.

Mr. Jim Snyder, Speaker Pro Tem, Kansas Silver-Haired Legislature presented testimony in opposition of **SB314**.

The proposed legislation affects people on a rigid income at a time when the nation's economy is bad. If the department needs extra money, the present law provides them the opportunity to raise the current license fee by \$4.50 each. This would generate \$1,000,000 without bothering the Legislature and without bothering Kansas senior citizens who are 65 years of age and older. No additional services being provided for seniors or anyone else. In past years meals on wheels and area agencies on aging have been cut and now there is another cost on back of senior. After a while you say enough is enough. (Attachment 2)

Mr. Snyder answered questions.

Written Testimony:

Don Woodward, Silver-Haired Legislature Representative (Attachment 3)

Ronald and Navella Richey, Topeka, Kansas (Attachment 4)

There being no further testimony on **SB314**, Chairman Powell closed the hearings.

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Representative Hayzlett moved to favorably pass out **SB314**. Representative Arpke seconded the motion.

Representative Kerschen moved to amend **SB314** by adding **HB2295** to **SB314**. Representative Collins seconded the motion. When called to a vote, the motion carried.

Representative Hayzlett moved to favorably pass **SB314** as amended. Representative Arpke seconded the motion. When called to a vote, the motion carried with 1 no vote by Representative Moxley.

Chairman asked for approval of the March 12,13,14,15, 16 minutes. Representative Arpke moved for approval. Representative Hoffman seconded the motion. When called to a vote the motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 9:35 a.m.