



TERRY MOULTON



WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR

23RD SENATE DISTRICT

From: Senator Terry Moulton
To: Committee on Sporting Heritage, Mining and Forestry
Re: Testimony on Senate Bill 150 and Assembly Bill 243
Relating to: restrictions on hunting antlerless deer by members of a group hunting party.
Date: October 28, 2015

Mr. Chairman and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today about Senate Bill 150 and its Assembly companion, Assembly Bill 243.

Wisconsin has some of the best hunting and fishing in the world and hunting is an important part of our state's history and heritage. In recent years, there has been a decline in the number of Wisconsin hunters.

In response, the legislature passed the 2013 Sporting Heritage Bill to increase hunter recruitment and retention. The bill established several programs to increase hunting in the state, including establishing Wisconsin's youth deer hunt, where hunters age 10-15 can hunt and gain valuable experience without competing against adult hunters.

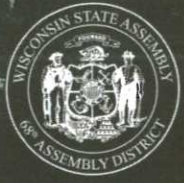
While the youth hunt has been well received, there have been statewide complaints of adults harvesting antlerless deer using a youth tag during group hunting. Under current group hunting laws, this tag sharing among youth and adults is legal, but reports of adults recruiting youth only to use their designated youth tags undermines the intent of the youth hunt. Senate Bill 150 would close this loophole and preserve the integrity of the youth hunt by prohibiting members of a group deer hunt from using a designated youth tag issued to another member of the party. This bill would ensure that deer marked with a designated youth tag were in fact harvested by youth.

I hope the committee will recommend passage of Senate Bill 150 to preserve the integrity of Wisconsin's youth hunt. Thank you again for allowing me to testify today.

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE

KATHY BERNIER

October 28, 2015

**Senate Committee on Sporting Heritage,
Mining, and Forestry**

Testimony on Assembly Bill 243 / Senate Bill 150

Good morning Chairman Tiffany and committee members. Thank you for hearing Assembly Bill 243 and Senate Bill 150 today and for the opportunity to speak in favor of these proposals.

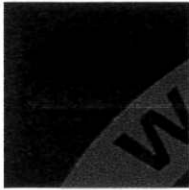
As a way to address and preserve the integrity of our youth hunt and ensure that carcass tags issued to hunters under age 18 are used properly. These bills address state statutes regarding deer hunting regulations related to group hunting parties. Specifically, the bills prohibit an adult member of a hunting party from using a youth carcass tag to harvest an antlerless deer for a youth member of their party.

The bill has been brought forward by Senator Moulton in response to statewide complaints about hunting parties harvesting deer with tags designated for youth, when those younger hunters are indeed, not the ones shooting.

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Senator Moulton and members of DNR will testify today with more specific information, but I am pleased to sponsor this legislation in the Assembly and if I can help answer any questions I am happy to do so. Again, thank you for your time and for hearing both proposals today.



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October 28, 2015

Testimony of the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation On SB 150 and AB 243

Chairman Tiffany, Members of the Senate Committee on Sporting Heritage, Mining and Forestry. My name is George Borchert and I am the President of the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation. The Federation is comprised of over 190 hunting, fishing, trapping and forestry related organizations located throughout the State of Wisconsin.

The Wildlife Federation strongly supports both SB 150 and AB 243 that prohibit any member of a hunting party from using an antlerless deer tag issued to a youth in that party to harvest a deer except the youth to which the antlerless tag is issued.

Antlerless tags are issued to youth for the purpose of providing greater opportunity to young men and women to increase their hunting skills and providing an increased chance for a successful hunt. An adult that would harvest an antlerless deer using a youth's tag is depriving that youth that important opportunity.

Secondly, in various deer management units, especially in northern Wisconsin, there are no antlerless tags issued to the general hunting population. It is unfair to the general hunting population in those units to allow adults in a hunting party with a youth with an antlerless tag to use the youth tag to harvest an antlerless deer and circumvent the zero antlerless tag status of those deer management units.

In conclusion, the Wildlife Federations thanks the authors of this bill for bringing it forward and ask that it be passed into law prior to the November traditional nine-day gun deer season.



Assembly Committee on Environment and Forestry
AB 243 and SB 150 – Youth Deer Hunting
October 28, 2015

Chair Tiffany and committee members:

Assembly Bill 243 and SB 150 would establish that the free antlerless deer tags issued with firearm deer licenses to people age 17 or younger, which is normally valid statewide under current rules, will not be valid for use in group bagging situations.

Currently, under our group hunting law, any member of a group of people who are all hunting with firearms may kill a deer for another member of the group as long as the person who kills the deer and the person who tags the deer are within sight and voice contact. Group hunting was first allowed in 1984.

The department heard concerns last fall about antlerless deer harvested by adults legally under the group deer hunting law in a season where antlerless permits were not generally available in most northern units. While many members of the public are fine with youth being able to harvest an antlerless deer in a non-quota unit, they tell us they do not like that adults can also fill those youth tags in group hunting situations.

The opportunity for a young deer hunter to harvest an antlerless deer increases their chances of success and keep them hunting. The department does not currently have authority to both issue those antlerless tags to youth *and* to prevent adults from tagging their deer with them. Our only *current, counterproductive* option is to invalidate youth antlerless deer permits for *anyone* in units without an antlerless deer quota.

The legislature can change the group deer hunting law in a way that preserves this antlerless deer hunting opportunity for young people but also establishes that junior antlerless tags are not available for group hunting and being filled by adults. That is what this bill does.

To give you an idea of the scope of things, I have attached the number of antlerless deer registered by youth hunters in areas where the department had not otherwise established an antlerless quota in recent years. Since the person whose tag is on the deer is person who is required to register it, we cannot tell how many of those deer were actually harvested by adults.

Thank you again for having me here to testify today, I would be happy to answer questions you may have.

Attachment:

- 2011: 575 antlerless kills by youth in the 8 No quota units (3077 sq mi of deer range for a kill of 0.19 per sq mile)
- 2012: 266 antlerless kills by youth in the 6 No quota units (1737 sq mi of deer range for a kill of 0.15 per sq mile)
- 2013: 95 antlerless kills by youth during the 9-day in the 4 No quota units (1109 sq mi of deer range for a kill of 0.09 per sq mile)
- 2014: 3277 antlerless kills by youth during the 9-day in the 16 No quota units (13,118 sq mi of deer range for a kill of 0.25 per sq mile) Douglas, Marinette and Florence are not counted as they either had an portion of the "unit" that had a quota or had high numbers of damage tags.