



Romaine Quinn

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 75th ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

11/08/2017

Chairman Kleefisch and members of the committee:

Thank you for holding a hearing on Assembly Bill 605, creating a mentored trapping program.

As you all know, Wisconsin has a long and proud tradition of outdoorsmanship – particularly hunting. Indeed, the right to “fish, hunt, trap, and take game” is enshrined in our state constitution.

Wisconsin’s mentored hunting program has done a marvelous job of bringing young people into this outdoor tradition. In 2015, 36,038 young people went out into the woods as a mentee. In 2016, that number was 36,142.

It is time to expand the option of mentoring to a group that sometimes gets unfairly overlooked: trapping. Wisconsin has a proud trapping heritage, and trapping is another way for many people to get out and take advantage of Wisconsin’s natural resources.

I began working with Scott Zimmerman of the Wisconsin Trappers’ Association more than a year ago to discuss how we could create a trapping program that encouraged young people and new potential trappers to experience this activity with a knowledgeable mentor, but not allow experienced trappers to game the system. We came up with a few criteria that would need to be met.

The most important criteria was that the mentee would be allowed to perform every action that a trapper performs – this includes setting the traps and collecting the animal from the trap. Under current law, taking an animal from a trap marked with someone else’s tag is illegal. A trapper must also be able to present a certificate of completion of a trapping education course.

AB 605 allows a mentee to take the contents of a trap while under the supervision of a mentor. It also clarifies the requirement to tag every trap with a trapper’s information. Current law requires every trap to be tagged with a metal stamp containing certain identifying information. This bill provides that a trap being used by a mentor and a mentee may be tagged by either or both persons. A trap tagged only by a mentee may be operated by that person and his or her mentor, but only if both persons are present.

The key in all this is proximity: a mentor and mentee must stay within sight and voice contact of each other – they should be in the woods together, not off checking far-flung traps to speed up the trapping process.

I mentioned that we want to create a program that brings in people from all walks of life who may not have had the chance to experience trapping before. Age restrictions are an important part of that. Under our bill, a person under 16 may be a mentee without need for a license. After that, a person who is over 16 may apply for a mentored trapping license, which is only good for a cumulative two years. That gives young people plenty of time to get the full experience with a qualified trapper before they complete trapping education themselves. It also gives adults who may have been hunters or anglers a chance to experience another Wisconsin tradition without fully committing to taking a trapper safety course. I have no doubt that once many of these sportsmen have experienced trapping, they'll want to get a license themselves.

Lastly, mentees will not be eligible for limited-draw tags. The mentored trapping program is intended to increase Wisconsinites' exposure to this aspect of our tradition, not to focus on high-value furs.

Just as with mentored hunting, a mentored trapping program will allow people from all walks of life to experience trapping under the mentorship of an experienced trapper. We should be taking every opportunity to encourage all Wisconsinites to get out and enjoy our wilderness – this bill does exactly that.



TERRY MOULTON



WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR

23RD SENATE DISTRICT

From: Senator Terry Moulton

To: Assembly Committee on Natural Resources and Sporting Heritage

Re: Testimony on Assembly Bill 605
Relating to: Youth trapping, creating a mentored trapping license, restrictions on taking or appropriating a trap or its contents, and requirements for tagging traps.

Date: November 8, 2017

Mr. Chairman and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today about Assembly Bill 605 and youth mentored trapping.

The legislature established Wisconsin's mentored hunting program in 2009, allowing a person to try hunting under the close supervision of an experienced mentor before they invest time and money in hunter education. This "try before you buy" model has been a huge success in recruiting and retaining new hunters. Last year, 26,000 new hunters participated in the mentored hunt and since 2009, more than 197,000 new hunters have used the program.

However, the mentored hunting program and the "try before you buy" model is not the same for new trappers. Before a child can trap with their parent, they must obtain a trapper license and complete the trapper education program. In Wisconsin, it costs \$12 to take the trapper course, \$10 for a trapper license if you're under the age of 15 and \$20 for someone over the age of 15 to obtain a trapper license.

While the costs of an education and licenses may seem small, it would help encourage young kids to get into the sport if they can try trapping before investing in training and licensing. Trapping is not necessarily easy to get into by yourself. A mentor can provide ample guidance and show their mentee exactly how to set traps and demonstrate the parts of the sport that make it worthwhile.

Assembly Bill 605 helps people get into trapping by allowing kids under the age of 16 to go out with a licensed trapper without having to get a trapper's license themselves. This bill also creates a mentored trapping license that allows for holders of any age to trap with a licensed mentor and collect the take from the trap as long as they are within voice or visual contact without a mechanical device besides a hearing aid.

Mentoring kids in our sporting heritage traditions is the best and most effective way to recruit lifelong participants. Please vote in favor of Assembly Bill 605 to make it easier for younger generations to get into trapping. Thank you again for allowing me to submit testimony today.

Serving the 23rd Senate District