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Testimony on Senate Bill 310

Thank you Chairman Stafsholt and members of the committee for hearing our testimony today. SB 310 is a simple bill aimed at making it easier for individuals with state IDs (not just driver's licenses) to establish residency for hunting and fishing licenses on the DNR Go Wild website. Currently, those with driver's licenses are able to get in-state rates for hunting and fishing online but since the DOT and DNR systems don't talk to each other on ID cards they can't access the Go Wild system.

If an individual walks into a Fleet Farm to get their hunting or fishing license, the cashier can see the ID, verify the information and issue the in-state license. The Go Wild online system can't currently process this information. SB 310 would ensure that the DOT provide the DNR with the information needed to verify ID information.

A bill is needed because the DOT is generally prohibited by law from disclosing ID information. This bill would allow the DOT system to communicate with the DNR just as they do for driver's license information.

Again, this is a simple bill to make it easier for those with state ID, but not a driver's license, to get an in-state hunting or fishing license.

The same bill passed this committee on a 5-0 vote last session and I'm hoping we can get bipartisan support again this session.

Thank you for your time. I would be happy to take any of your questions now.



JILL BILLINGS
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

September 21, 2023

Chairman Stafsholt and Committee Members,

Thank you for holding a public hearing on Steve's Law, Senate Bill 310 which works to improve the accessibility of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) licensing system—GoWild.

Steve's Law is introduced in honor of Steve Johnson, a blind individual from the La Crosse area, who passed in 2019. He dedicated his life to many service organizations, including the Wisconsin Disability Advisory Council, the Wisconsin Council for the Blind & Visually Impaired, the North American Squirrel Association, and more. Steve worked to raise awareness and create change on issues impacting those with disabilities, including this statute change.


Quite simply Steve's Law allows people to use state identification cards to verify residency using the DNR's GoWild system in the same way that those possessing drivers' licenses do. Currently, with certain exceptions, state law prohibits the use of state identification card data. Because of this, the DNR does not have statutory authority to access the state identification card database in the way it can access driver's license records to validate residency. This creates a burdensome obstacle for certain individuals to overcome.

There are many reasons why an individual may possess a state identification card rather than a drivers' license, including various disabilities that may prevent a person from driving. Just having a different form of official state-issued ID should not preclude Wisconsin residents from being able to use the DNR's GoWild system.

I hope you'll join me in supporting Steve's Law, Senate Bill 310, to make outdoor recreation more accessible for all Wisconsinites.

Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,


Jill Billings
State Representative
95th Assembly District



To: Wisconsin Senate Committee on Financial Institutions and Sporting Heritage

From: Denise Jess, Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired

Re: SB 310

Date: Thursday, September 21, 2023

On behalf of Wisconsin's residents living with vision impairment, other disabilities and anyone who holds a State of Wisconsin identification card rather than a driver's license, I urge you to vote in favor of SB 310 and move the bill to the full Senate for consideration.

The mission of the Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired is to promote the dignity and empowerment of all of Wisconsin's more than 109,000 residents living with vision loss through advocacy, education and vision services. The fastest growing segment of our population is older adults, who lose sight due to diseases such as diabetes, macular degeneration and glaucoma. The number of Wisconsin residents experiencing life-changing vision loss is expected to double by 2050, directly impacting many Wisconsin families.

Those of us with vision loss and people with other disabilities are unable to legally drive, and therefore hold a Wisconsin identification card instead of a driver's license. SB 310 seeks to amend an issue with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' "Go Wild" system, which requires a Wisconsin driver's license to prove residency to set up an account to allow for repeat visits to the site to purchase hunting, fishing and other outdoor recreational licenses. Amending the statute would allow all qualified Wisconsin residents to have equal access to these

opportunities.

People like Steve Johnson, for whom the bill is named, would have equitable access to this valuable state service. Until his death a few years ago, Steve was an avid fisher, hunter and outdoorsperson. He was fully blind, was a member of our board of directors, an articulate advocate for the visually impaired and dedicated public servant. Steve believed that anyone who wanted should have access to all the amazing outdoor opportunities Wisconsin has to offer. Amending statute by passage of SB 310 would keep Steve's dream alive.

By amending state law in this instance to recognize the legal use of the Wisconsin state ID, further precedent is set to avoid repeating these drafting issues in the future. All too often, people who do not hold a driver's license and do not drive are not afforded the same rights and access as those with a driver's license. Both are equally valid forms of identification, and all our state systems need to recognize them as such.

The Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired is grateful for the bipartisan effort to create equitable access to state services.

Respectfully,

Denise Jess
Executive Director



Senate Committee on Financial Institutions and Sporting Heritage

2023 Senate Bill 310

*Access to Department of Transportation records to establish residency for approvals
issued by the Department of Natural Resources
September 21, 2023*

Good afternoon, Chair Stafsholt, and members of the Committee. My name is Katherine Walker, and I am the Customer and Outreach Services Policy Advisor for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Thank you for the opportunity to testify, for informational purposes, on Senate Bill 310, related to access to Department of Transportation records to establish residency for approvals issued by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Current law establishes a variety of hunting, trapping, and fishing approvals and specifies fees that are, in general, lower for residents than nonresidents. Wisconsin Statute specifies that a resident hunting, trapping or fishing approval may only be issued to a person who presents to the issuing agent or the department definite proof of his or her identity and that he or she is a resident. Current law as it relates to purchasing approvals authorized under Ch. 29, Wis. Stats., defines a resident as anyone who has maintained a permanent abode in the state for at least 30 days prior to applying for an approval, which must be established by demonstrating domiciliary intent. Under current law, evidence of domiciliary intent includes voting, paying personal income taxes, or obtaining a driver's license at a location in the state. Senate Bill 310 (SB 310) adds that domiciliary intent may also be satisfied by obtaining an identification card issued by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT).

Current law requires DOT to maintain records of all identification card holders and generally prohibits DOT from disclosing the records to any person or agency (with limited exceptions). This prohibition has prevented the DNR from offering resident approvals to those who only possess a State ID card. SB 310 requires DOT to provide DNR electronic access to its identification card records for the purpose of verifying the residency of applicants for DNR approvals. The provisions of SB 310 allow those who do not possess a driver's license, such as some individuals with disabilities and youth, to use their State ID card in the same manner that a resident may use their Wisconsin driver's license to prove residency at license agents and online.

The department will incur modest ongoing costs to compensate the Department of Transportation for server and media costs to access State ID records, as is currently done for driver records. The department will incur one-time costs of \$8,500 or less to make necessary changes to the GoWild system, train both customer service representatives and retail license agents, update department web pages and hunting, trapping, and fishing regulations, and also update the department's Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Transportation.

Finally, SB 310 includes a helpful delayed effective date, providing six months for implementation.

On behalf of the Department of Natural Resources, we would like to thank you for your time today. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.