



MISSOURI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WITNESS APPEARANCE FORM

BILL NUMBER: HB 2202		DATE: 2/23/2026
COMMITTEE: Conservation and Natural Resources		
TESTIFYING: <input type="checkbox"/> IN SUPPORT OF <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IN OPPOSITION TO <input type="checkbox"/> FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES		
WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: ARNIE C. "HONEST-ABE" DIENOFF-STATE PUBLIC ADVOCAT		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 2/23/2026 11:50 PM
THE INFORMATION ON THIS FORM IS PUBLIC RECORD UNDER CHAPTER 610, RSMo.		

I am Opposed to this Bill. We are the number one or Number two State in the Nation to care, take care and offer Tax-Cuts and Discounts to Military Personnel, Retired and the Disabled. This Bill goes against the Mission and origin of the Missouri Department of Conservation.



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: MARK ZURBRICK		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:		STATE: ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: Written	SUBMIT DATE: 2/23/2026 9:53 AM

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Living in Pulaski County, and having worked at Fort Leonard Wood for years, many of my neighbors and friends are active-duty or retired military. I have the upmost respect for their service and sacrifice to our country, and yes, there are no doubt, a number of proper and legal ways to show our appreciation for our men and women in the armed forces; however, HB 2202 is not one of these.

Article IV, Section 40-46 of the Missouri Constitution places the sole authority to the Conservation Commission to control, manage, restore, conserve, and regulate the fish and wildlife resources of the state. As an executive agency, the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) has the sole authority to determine who is exempt from hunting and fishing licenses and permits issued by this agency.

Article II, Section 1 of the Missouri Constitution provides a system of checks and balances that states that every branch and agency of government (including the Missouri Legislature), is distinct from others and cannot lawfully restrict or exercise the powers of the other agencies (such as MDC) except in the instances expressly directed or permitted by the Constitution. Accordingly, HB2202 violates this article of the Constitution by attempting to restrict the MDC from issuing and/or charging a fee for the privilege to hunt and fish in our state.

A similar legislative attempt to infringe upon and restrict MDC was addressed by the Missouri Supreme Court, as recently as 2022, in which the court found in favor of MDC and reaffirmed its constitutional authority.

The fiscal note attached to HB2202, states that the Conservation Commission Fund could be negatively impacted by this bill by as much as \$4,976,000 per fiscal year! That's nearly five million dollars less to spend to insure that Missourians, including those in uniform, enjoy some of the best hunting and fishing in the United States.

If the bill's sponsor truly wishes to show appreciation to those who are or have served in the military, why not pass legislation that allows military folks to claim any license fees (hunting, fishing, drivers licenses, vehicle registration, etc.) as a state tax write off? Or might they be better off if the legislature focused on providing service members and their families with an overall better quality of life here in the Show-Me state.

Putting aside the matter of constitutional authority, one might ask if our elected legislators' time and effort be better spent on addressing other important issues and agencies in much more need of change and improvement? Please address the needs of our schools, roads, law enforcement,

economy, health care, etc. and let MDC continue to do an outstanding job of managing our natural resources.

Please vote NO regarding HB2202.

Thank You for Your Consideration,
Mark Zurbrick,
Newburg, MO



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WITNESS NAME		
INDIVIDUAL:		
WITNESS NAME: STEVE JONES		PHONE NUMBER:
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME:		TITLE:
ADDRESS:		
CITY:	STATE:	ZIP:
EMAIL:	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 2/22/2026 11:26 PM
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DRAFT

Good afternoon. My name is Steve Jones. I'm an Army veteran who has hunted and fished all my life.

I volunteered in 1977 and served 4 years active duty, then a brief stint in the Army Reserve, after which I received my final honorable discharge as a Staff Sergeant. I'm also a life member of Veterans of Foreign Wars.

I'm supportive of veterans' interests and encourage genuine efforts to honor military service, but I oppose HB 2202.

Existing MDC regulations already recognize and acknowledge sacrifices made by veterans. Disabled veterans and former POWs are not required to purchase various permits to hunt or fish, with exceptions for things like deer or turkey tags. Active duty military and their families stationed in Missouri qualify for resident permits. I have attached a sheet documenting the significant extent of these benefits.

Here are some facts that clearly cast HB 2202 in a questionable light:

Missourians age 65 or older already can fish or hunt free, except deer & turkey, or places that require special permits.

The youngest living veteran who was drafted into US military service is over 70 years old today - well above the age current MDC rules already accommodate for free hunting and fishing.

Disabled veterans and former POWs already have extensive relief from the need to purchase hunting and fishing permits in Missouri.

**In fact, a practical matter, the language in HB 2202 affects only veterans who check these 3 boxes:
 Not disabled
 younger than 65
 Were not drafted**

Again, all other veterans already have most of these benefits.

I've discussed this proposal with a few veterans of my acquaintance, and have yet to encounter one who thinks it's called for.

And then there's the money. The fiscal note estimates that if enacted this proposal would cost the MDC budget over \$8.5 million annually.

To give a veteran like me the same benefits and recognition as those who were drafted, spent time as a POW, or who suffer the effects of service related injury or illness is frankly absurd.

This legislation could only be enacted after passing both chambers, then be signed by the governor, then surviving an inevitable challenge in the Supreme Court. I doubt anyone in this room seriously believes HB 2202 could ever survive that gauntlet.

So you should each carefully consider whether this idea should die quietly in committee, and thus further distract neither the legislature nor the conservation community that stands ready to defend Missouri's conservation heritage.

(Current MDC veteran benefits, to be attached to the submitted testimony, not read aloud)

From: <https://mdc.mo.gov/permits/veteran-benefits>

The Missouri Conservation Commission recognizes the contributions and sacrifices made by veterans and active duty military and has approved several permit exemptions and low cost permits for active duty military and veterans. This includes:

Any honorably discharged resident or nonresident veteran having a service-related disability of 60% or greater or who was a prisoner of war during military service may hunt (but not trap) wildlife — except black bears, deer, elk, and turkeys — without a permit but must carry a certified statement of eligibility from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Any member of the U.S. military currently assigned as a patient to a Warrior Transition Brigade, Warrior Transition Unit, or a military medical center may hunt (but not trap) wildlife — except black bears, deer, elk, and turkeys — without a permit but must carry orders showing such assignment. However:

A Missouri Migratory Bird Hunting Permit is required to hunt waterfowl, snipe, doves, woodcock, and rails.

A Federal Duck Stamp is required to hunt waterfowl.

A Conservation Order Permit is required to hunt light geese during the Conservation Order.

Any honorably discharged military veteran having a service-related disability of 60% or greater; or who was a prisoner of war; or currently assigned as a patient to a Warrior Transition Brigade, Warrior Transition Unit or a military medical center may receive permits at resident prices. The Warrior Transition Unit/Brigade would include programs such as the Wounded Warrior Program.

Active duty military and their families stationed in Missouri qualify for resident permits, and resident active duty military and their immediate family stationed out of state qualify for Missouri resident permits.

If an individual bought a Missouri hunting, fishing, or trapping permit and then couldn't use it for the full valid season because they were called to military duty out of state, they qualify for a free reinstatement of the permit privilege upon their return.

Residents of Missouri who are currently, or have in the previous twelve (12) months, been mobilized and serving on full-time active military duty in either the National Guard (in Federal Status) or Reserve forces of the United States can hunt small game, fish, and trap with a low-cost permit.

Veterans are also encouraged to contact one of Missouri's four trout parks for these free fishing events specifically for service men and women:

Roaring River Fish Hatchery: Usually held on a Saturday in Mid-September

Bennett Spring Fish Hatchery: Usually held on the third Saturday in April

Montauk Fish Hatchery: Usually held on the Saturday after Labor Day

Maramec Spring Fish Hatchery: Usually held on the first Saturday in June



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WITNESS NAME		
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION:		
WITNESS NAME: AARON JEFFRIES		PHONE NUMBER: 573-680-4539
BUSINESS/ORGANIZATION NAME: MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION		TITLE:
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CITY: JEFFERSON CITY		STATE: MO
		ZIP: 65109
EMAIL: Aaron.Jeffries@mdc.mo.gov	ATTENDANCE: In-Person	SUBMIT DATE: 2/23/2026 10:07 AM
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