

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Overview

This bill establishes a lifetime entitlement to an annual choice of a hunting license, fishing license and/or a state park permit to combat veterans who were Minnesota residents upon entering the military and who since 9/11/2001 have served for a total of six-months or more in Iraq and Afghanistan in support of the Global War on Terror.

Section

- 1 **DNR; Lifetime eligibility.** Directs the commissioner of natural resources to issue without fee the benefits described in section 2, subdivision 6 to eligible veterans, as determined by the commissioner of veterans affairs. Applies to licenses issued on or after January 1, 2007.
- 2 **DVA: Veterans outdoor revitalization act.**

Subd. 1. Title. "Veterans Revitalization Outdoor Act of 2006."

Subd. 2. Purpose statement. To provide our returning combat veterans continuing opportunities for the health and wellness in the Minnesota outdoors

Subd. 3. Definitions. Establishes eligibility criteria. To be eligible, an applicant must:

- Be a veteran;
- Have been a Minnesota resident at time of entry into the military;
- Have served honorably;

Section

- Be eligible for the Iraq Campaign Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, or the GWOT Expeditionary Medal for the same service; and
- Have served 180 days or more in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Subd. 4. Commissioner's role. Directs that the commissioner of veterans affairs must determine an applicant's eligibility from the person's military records, and issue each eligible veteran a certificate of eligibility, which the veteran must show to the DNR license agent each year when requesting a free hunting or fishing license or state park permit. The bill classifies any data collected as *public data on individuals* under the Data Privacy Act.

Subd. 5. Combat service; qualifying benefit levels. Provides an eligible veteran the option of one, two or three licenses/permit per year, as follows:

- one benefit, for 6 to 9 months of combat service, or if ordered to serve 180 days or more but was medically evacuated sooner;
- two benefits, for 9 to 18 months of combat service; and
- three benefits, for over 18 months of combat service, or if the person was wounded and evacuated and was awarded a Purple Heart Medal as a result.

Subd. 6. Benefit options. Lists the benefit options from which an eligible veteran may choose, as:

- annual state park permit
- annual resident small game hunting license
- resident firearms deer hunting license
- resident archery deer hunting license
- annual resident angling license

Also provides that an eligible veteran:

- has this entitlement lifetime;
- may choose the same or a different benefit each year;
- may skip one or more years without penalty;
- may not compensate for any skipped years by choosing additional benefits in a subsequent year;
- may not reverse any benefit choice during a year; and
- may not transfer the benefit option to another person.

3 Appropriations. Appropriates (a blank \$ amounts) to natural resources for the licenses and permits it issues to eligible veterans, and (a blank \$ amounts) to veterans affairs for its administrative duties in determining eligibility, effective for FY07 and eligible until it expires.

Effective date. July 1, 2006 for eligibility determination, with issuance of licenses and permits beginning January 1, 2007.