

SESSION OF 2012

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON SENATE BILL NO. 314

As Amended by Senate Committee on Natural
Resources

Brief*

SB 314 would amend existing law regarding hunting and fishing license fees for resident seniors. Specifically, the bill would:

- Increase the age of a person exempt from purchasing hunting or fishing licenses from 65, or more, years of age to 75, or more, years of age;
- Create a resident senior hunting and fishing pass ("senior pass") for those 65 years old, or more, at a cost that does not exceed one-eighth of the fee for a general combination lifetime hunting and fishing license;
- Establish an annual hunting or fishing license fee for residents who are 65 to 74 years of age at a cost of an amount equal to one-half the fee for a general annual hunting or fishing license;
- Establish an annual combination hunting and fishing license for residents who are 65 to 74 years of age that would cost an amount equal to one-half the fee for a general annual combination hunting and fishing license; and
- Sunset the provisions of the "senior pass" and the annual hunting, fishing, and combination license fees on June 30, 2020.

*Supplemental notes are prepared by the Legislative Research Department and do not express legislative intent. The supplemental note and fiscal note for this bill may be accessed on the Internet at <http://www.kslegislature.org>

Background

The bill was introduced by the Senate Committee on Natural Resources at the request of the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWPT).

At the Senate Committee on Natural Resources hearing, the Secretary of KDWPT provided testimony in favor of the bill, stating the cost of a license for those age 65 and older is minimal in comparison with the costs associated with hunting or fishing. Secondly, the Secretary stated the bill is not about taking anything away from the state's seniors, but it is about passing on our outdoor traditions to our children and grandchildren. The Secretary also provided information to the Senate Committee stating the exemption age for hunters and anglers was 70 years old until 1971, when the Legislature reduced the age to 65, as life expectancy in 1971 was 71 years old, while today it is 78.5 years. The Secretary also clarified that any revenue received from removing the exemption would be used to continue the wildlife programs within the agency, per federal law, as well as to move towards making the agency self-sufficient. A member of the public also provided testimony in favor of the bill, stating those over 65 years old continue to pay excise taxes on all hunting and fishing equipment; thus, hunting and fishing license fees are very small in proportion to the overall costs of participating in outdoors activities.

Opponents that provided testimony on the bill included the Kansas State Rifle Association; the Speaker Pro Tem for the Kansas Silverhaired Legislature; the Kansas Area Agencies on Aging Association (KAAAA); and two members of the public. The Kansas State Rifle Association presented its member survey regarding the original version of the bill. Of the survey respondents, 84.3 percent were not in favor of repealing the license fee exemptions for seniors. The Speaker Pro Tem for the Kansas Silverhaired Legislature provided testimony stating that asking seniors to pay a license fee when they are on a fixed income is not the right thing to do and will have a negative consequence on the

number of seniors who will enjoy the outdoors in the future. The KAAAA provided testimony stating a query of U.S. Census Bureau data indicates the mean retirement income of Kansas seniors was \$18,381 in the past 12 months. In addition, the KAAAA stated that of the 376,116 seniors living in Kansas, as of 2010, make up earlier generations that do not yet include the "Baby Boomer" generation, of which the KDWPT is concerned. The KAAAA stated "Baby Boomers" only have begun turning age 65 in January 2011. The members of the public also shared their sentiments regarding fixed incomes and the burden of paying a license fee on the fixed incomes.

The Senate Committee made several amendments to the bill, which included:

- Authorizing the KDWPT to offer a resident senior hunting and fishing pass to Kansas residents 65 years old or more. The fee for the pass would be an amount not exceeding one-eighth the fee for a general combination lifetime hunting and fishing license;
- Authorizing the KDWPT to offer an annual resident hunting or fishing license for those 65 to 74 years old or more for an amount equal to one-half the fee for a general annual hunting or fishing license;
- Authorizing the KDWPT to offer an annual combination hunting and fishing license for residents 65 to 74 years old at an amount equal to one-half the fee for a general annual combination hunting and fishing license;
- Exempting persons who are 75 years old or more from having to purchase hunting or fishing licenses; and
- Sunset the provisions of the bill on June 30, 2020.

The fiscal note provided by the Division of the Budget on the original version of the bill states passage of the bill would increase fee revenues in FY 2013 by \$702,999. Of this amount, \$477,000 would be from actual fees paid for hunting and fishing licenses and \$225,999 would come from the increase in federal matching funds based on the number of hunting and fishing licenses sold. Because fees for hunting and fishing licenses are based on the calendar year instead of the fiscal year, the revenue increase for FY 2014 is expected to be twice that of FY 2013, or \$1.4 million. Any fiscal effect associated with the bill is not reflected in *The FY 2013 Governor's Budget Report*.