

SUBJECT: Proof of residency for Parks and Wildlife Department licenses

COMMITTEE: Culture, Recreation, and Tourism — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 5 ayes — Hilderbran, Kuempel, Dunnam, Gallego, Phillips
0 nays
2 absent — Baxter, Dukes

WITNESSES: For — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Kirby Brown, Texas Wildlife Association)
Against — None

BACKGROUND: The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) issues licenses for certain activities, including hunting and fishing. The department requires proof of residence for applicants to obtain in-state license rates, which can be significantly less expensive. While the statutes define resident for these purposes as someone who has lived in Texas for more than six months, it does not state which forms of identification would be sufficient to establish proof of residency.

DIGEST: HB 1636 would permit TPWD to determine, by rule, what forms of identification would be sufficient to establish residency.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2005.

SUPPORTERS SAY: HB 1636 would permit TPWD to establish how people can show they are Texas residents and receive the in-state rate for hunting or fishing licenses. On a standard hunting license, the in-state rate is \$23 and the out-of-state is \$300, so people are quite motivated to prove that they are residents.

TPWD would consider public input through its standard rule-making process to ensure that groups of residents would not be put in a difficult

position proving their residency. That process involves public meetings, publication in the Texas Register, and a period of public comment.

**OPPONENTS
SAY:**

This bill should more clearly define what documents could be used to establish residency. If TPWD limited acceptable forms of identification to a driver's license, voter identification card, or other government-issued identification, then some residents who do not possess these could be locked out of the local rate.