

**SUBJECT:** Hunting and fishing license fee exemptions for Texas guard members

**COMMITTEE:** Defense Affairs and State-Federal Relations — favorable, without amendment

**VOTE:** 7 ayes — Corte, Escobar, Garcia, Hodge, Merritt, Noriega, Raymond  
0 nays  
2 absent — Herrero, Moreno

**WITNESSES:** None

**BACKGROUND:** In 2005, the 79th Legislature enacted HB 1076 by Crabb et al., which amended Parks and Wildlife Code sec. 42.012(b) and sec. 46.004(c) to require the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) to waive hunting and fishing license fees for active duty U.S. military personnel.

**DIGEST:** HB 2130 would amend Parks and Wildlife Code, sec. 42.012(b) and sec. 46.004(b) by adding active duty Texas Army National Guard, Texas Air National Guard, and Texas State Guard to the class of people for whom the department would waive license fees for fishing and hunting.

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, 2007.

**SUPPORTERS SAY:** HB 2130 would make official in statute that active state and national guard members are entitled to have their hunting and fishing license fees waived. Much like members of the U.S. military, the brave men and women who serve in the guard risk their lives to protect this country, and the state should express some of its appreciation by allowing these servicemen and women to obtain hunting and fishing licenses at no charge.

TPWD already includes active duty guard members in the hunting and fishing license fee waivers it offers to U.S. military personnel. As a result, HB 2130 would have no fiscal impact to the state. It simply would bring the law up-to-date with standard department practices.

OPPONENTS  
SAY:

By waiving hunting and fishing fees for guard members, the Legislature might set a precedent leading to future waivers for other groups of equally deserving people, such as firemen or policemen. On March 19, the State Auditor's Office released a report addressing operating conditions at TPWD and found the department could do more to improve park revenues. With this in mind, the Legislature should be cautious about adopting policies that could result in less TPWD revenue.