

SUBJECT: Extending special open hunting seasons for youth under 17 years old

COMMITTEE: Culture, Recreation and Tourism — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 7 ayes — K. King, Gervin-Hawkins, Burns, Israel, Krause, Martinez, C. Morales

1 nay — Clardy

1 absent — Frullo

WITNESSES: For — None

Against — John Shepperd, Texas Foundation for Conservation;
(*Registered, but did not testify:* David Yeates, Texas Wildlife Association)

On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Kirby Brown, Ducks Unlimited;
David Sinclair, Game Warden Peace Officers Association; Shaun Oldenburger, Texas Parks and Wildlife)

BACKGROUND: Parks and Wildlife Code sec. 61.058 permits the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission to provide for special open seasons during which the taking and possession of game animals and game birds are restricted to persons under 17 years old. The commission also may provide for special means and methods for the taking and possession of aquatic animal life by individuals under 17.

Interested parties note that several current youth hunting seasons are limited to only two weekend days and that extending those seasons to seven consecutive days would provide more time for youth to learn how to hunt responsibly outside of the regular season.

DIGEST: CSHB 1984 would require a special open season for youth hunting and fishing to be no shorter than seven consecutive days. The provisions of the bill would not apply to a special open season for migratory game birds or waterfowl.

As soon as practicable after the effective date of the bill, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission would have to amend or adopt the rules as necessary to comply with the bill.

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, 2021.