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COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

GAME AND FISHERIES COMMITTEE

GIRARD AMERICAN LEGION
42 WALL STREET
GIRARD, PA 16417

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2017
4:41 P.M.

PUBLIC HEARING - HB 1686 AND HB 1409

BEFORE: HONORABLE KEITH GILLESPIE, MAJORITY CHAIRMAN
HONORABLE CURTIS SONNEY
HONORABLE PARKE WENTLING
HONORABLE MAUREEN MADDEN, ACTING MINORITY
CHAIRMAN
HONORABLE PATRICK HARKINS

ALSO
PRESENT: JOHN ARWAY
ED MASCHARKA
JERRY SKRYPZAK
ROCCO ALI
ED KISSELL
GREGORY RAFFENSPERGER
STEVE MCMILLEN

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P R O C E E D I N G S

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3 CHAIRMAN GILLESPIE: Good afternoon,
4 everybody. I'm Pete Gillespie. I am the Republican
5 Chair of the House Game and Fisheries Committee. We're
6 going to call this hearing to order.

7 Those of you who may have an agenda,
8 we're going to just mix things up a little bit because
9 Representative Harkins needs to get to another part of
10 this here in the hour coming up.

11 Also, I'd like to introduce
12 Representative Maureen Madden, who is pinch hitting for
13 Democratic Chair Bryan Barbin.

14 REPRESENTATIVE MADDEN: Hi. Good
15 afternoon. I'm Representative Madden, Maureen, from
16 the 115th District, another beautiful part of the
17 Commonwealth, the Poconos. And it's my pleasure to be
18 here today. It's a beautiful part of Pennsylvania, a
19 lovely 300-mile ride here, and I look forward to the
20 hearing. Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN GILLESPIE: Thank you, Acting
22 Chairman, Madam.

23 And we're going to start with
24 introductions down here with Representative Harkins.

25 REPRESENTATIVE HARKINS: Sure. Good

1 afternoon, everyone. I'm Pat Harkins. I represent the
2 First District in Erie.

3 REPRESENTATIVE SONNEY: Curt Sonney. I
4 represent the Fourth District. And obviously, we just
5 love it when people from Harrisburg come to Erie. You
6 know, they finally get to see what it's really like.

7 MR. MCMILLEN: I'm Steve McMillen. I'm
8 the Democratic Executive Director of the Committee.

9 MR. RAFFENSPERGER: Greg Raffensperger,
10 Public and Executive Director of the Committee.

11 REPRESENTATIVE WENTLING: Parke
12 Wentling, State Representative 17th Legislative
13 District, which includes Girard, in Erie County. I
14 also represent portions of Crawford, Mercer and
15 Lawrence County.

16 REPRESENTATIVE ENGLISH: Representative
17 Al English from Allegheny County. It's nice to be back
18 in Erie. I did five years of my reserve unit up by the
19 VA Hospital. I'm near the Edinboro line and it's
20 snowing, not good, so it's a lovely day in here.

21 CHAIRMAN GILLESPIE: Well, great. With
22 that, we're going to get started. I do want to extend
23 my thanks for Representative Wentling and
24 Representative Harkins for introducing these bills and
25 expressing an interest to have a hearing. This is a

1 beautiful part of the state, a beautiful time of the
2 year to be up here.

3 I live in York County, so it was a 340
4 mile plus ride, I guess, to get up here. And it's just
5 absolutely beautiful to drive through Pennsylvania and
6 see how blessed we are with the natural resources that
7 we pass coming through here.

8 So with that, as I said, we're going to
9 just change things around a little bit. We're going to
10 start with Representative Harkins on his House Bill
11 1686.

12 REPRESENTATIVE HARKINS: Thank you, Mr.
13 Chairman. I did like to echo the sentiments of my
14 colleague, Representative Sonney. We always enjoy
15 having people travel up here so they can see what kind
16 of driving we go through every time we drive home, back
17 and forth. And lately it's been too much, but
18 hopefully we're going to wind that down.

19 But today, dealing with this bill, first
20 off, I'd like to thank Chairman Gillespie and also my
21 friend and colleague, Parke Wentling. He had come to
22 me - Parke had come to me about six months ago, and we
23 were working on something with Fish and Game. And I
24 used to be a member of this committee, and we - like
25 the Chairman said, we travel around the state and see

1 the beauty of what we have and everything. And
2 naturally, with the resources we have, we have to keep
3 the finances going to sustain those entities and the
4 things that we have. So Parke Wentling and I got
5 together, and we happened to be with some fish people,
6 and we talked about the Lake Erie stamp. And there was
7 a push last session to get that motivated and get it
8 going again. Because like everything else, nothing in
9 our personal lives or our business lives ever comes
10 down in price.

11 So we looked at some of the angles and
12 some of the things we could do, and we realized that we
13 need to increase the funds, to sustain the funds. And
14 we talked a little bit about the resources that we have
15 and how we keep those going and, at the same time, look
16 to the future and add to some of those things and make
17 sure that we have things ready to go for the next
18 generation, so to speak.

19 So we arrived at this bill. I know
20 there was a chance or a push to get it going last
21 session on the Senate and the House side, but it just
22 didn't come to fruition. So we're at this point right
23 now optimistic that it will run soon and to keep in
24 mind that it's - those dollars are geared towards the
25 Erie area and they would remain here. And it was the

1 forward thinking of Jane Earl back in, I think, 2004,
2 with Act 159 that got this going in the first place.

3 Much has changed in that time span, 17
4 years I think to be exact, but in 2009 Act 40 was
5 passed, and that expanded the use of the Lake Erie
6 permit proceeds to include protection and improvement
7 of this fish habitat.

8 Fast forward, and now we're looking at
9 land acquisitions and things that would supplement some
10 of the other proposals that we have going on, and it
11 just seemed like a logical thing to introduce this
12 bill. So that's kind of where I'm at with it.

13 I had a lot of support from a lot of
14 people with it. Not much pushback of any - from
15 anybody after you explain everything.

16 Myself and Representative Fabrizio were
17 with some people the other day, and naturally they were
18 complaining about the cost of the fishing license and
19 everything else. And Representative Fabrizio reminded
20 them, if you don't like the cost, go to Wegmans. But
21 we just think that this is the right thing to do and
22 this is the right time to do it.

23 There's a lot of people in the room
24 right now who are great supporters, Ed Kissell from
25 S.O.N.S. of Lake Erie, along with Jerry Skrypzak. I

1 walked in with them just now. And also, even people
2 like John Oliver from Visit Erie is here in case
3 there's any questions or any comments.

4 This all is a united effort and a united
5 front on everybody's front to propel Erie into the -
6 into the - into the spotlight with fishing and with
7 boating and everything else that we have going on up
8 here.

9 So I'll leave it at that. I'll be
10 brief. I'm losing my voice as it is. And I won't bore
11 you, but again, thank you to my colleagues and thank
12 you all for coming out today.

13 CHAIRMAN GILLESPIE: Thank you,
14 Representative Harkins. And also thank you for your
15 advocacy for Lake Erie and the tributaries to that.
16 And obviously, these agencies need whatever support
17 they can get. Thank you for your initiative in
18 carrying that forward.

19 Questions, further discussion by any of
20 the members? Acting Chair Madden?

21 CHAIRMAN MADDEN: I have one question.

22 REPRESENTATIVE HARKINS: Sure.

23 CHAIRMAN MADDEN: Thank you for your
24 testimony. How have the projects already accomplished
25 through the Lake Erie staff been received by your

1 constituents?

2 REPRESENTATIVE HARKINS: It's been a
3 great effort on everybody's part. Myself, I have a
4 boat down at Lampe Marina, and I often get stopped by
5 some of the people in the room even, to the point where
6 we put a box up because I said I can't hear all the
7 complaints all at once. So I do have some - a
8 suggestion box is what we call it. But I've been out
9 quite a bit this past summer, and it's always been very
10 favorable.

11 Naturally, nobody likes to hear of any
12 increases, any fees or any taxes, but when you show
13 people what this goes towards and what the positive end
14 of it is, everybody has been very receptive to it. In
15 fact, there are some people who have said to me along
16 the way we should have done this before. We should
17 have moved this up a couple years. We should have done
18 this and that. But the positive sentence there, I
19 don't think you'll see much resistance in the area.

20 CHAIRMAN MADDEN: Okay. Thank you.

21 REPRESENTATIVE HARKINS: Sure. Thank
22 you.

23 CHAIRMAN GILLESPIE: Representative
24 Wentling?

25 REPRESENTATIVE WENTLING: I have a

1 question, Pat.

2 REPRESENTATIVE HARKINS: Sure.

3 REPRESENTATIVE WENTLING: This is a fund
4 that may be used for other projects to support public
5 fishing around Lake Erie, Presque Isle Bay or
6 tributaries. Commissioner Arway is here, and will have
7 some ideas, and yourself, of the project. And the
8 change in the way the permit will be.

9 REPRESENTATIVE HARKINS: I would just
10 briefly add that, dare I say, in the marinas and in all
11 the tributaries and the areas that we have, just trying
12 to maintain those, keep things moving in a positive
13 direction, fish cleaning stations that are coming about
14 right now - I happened to be out in the middle of
15 August with - a beautiful Monday afternoon. I had a
16 call that the Governor's people were in town. Would I
17 take them out? I had had the boat tuned up, took them
18 out, four of them, his planner and his other key
19 people. And the County Commissioners were here.

20 We went out around the lighthouse. The
21 boat was running great. We stopped. We took pictures.
22 Many of them said they would never leave Erie if they
23 had known what this place was like. We're coming back
24 and the boat starts to backfire, and we're running on
25 two cylinders. We get into the marina and I hand the

1 one the ten-foot pole to pull us to the side. But just
2 to see the tow, towing the lake shore and the things
3 that are available, those kind of things come into my
4 mind. When you're out in the middle of the lake, you
5 can't walk very far to get help. And if your phone
6 isn't working, you're really up a creek, as they say.
7 But no, just anything that would help us with the
8 situations that we had come across, but I'll defer to
9 the chairman and let him expound on that. But that was
10 just a personal thing that I had heard or witnessed or
11 encountered. And the Governor told me that I should
12 have left them out there that day, so - I don't know
13 what that was all about. If you would?

14 MR. ARWAY: Sure. Thanks.

15 First, I'd like to just thank Pat for
16 resurrecting the bill that broadened the use of the
17 fund. We've collected about \$10 million since 2004,
18 when the stamp was originally created. And we have
19 invested a lot of that money back into the habitat and
20 access. So we've got over 20 miles of stream that
21 anglers can fish now that they weren't able to fish
22 before because they were in public - private land. We
23 put the landowners, buy property and also have deed
24 restrictions for anglers to use it forever.

25 So the program's been really successful,

1 but recently we've been - kind of got all the
2 low-hanging fruit with the properties that are
3 available. So as a result, we established the Lake
4 Erie Advisory Committee. And it's just a collection of
5 groups. The S.O.N.S. are on it, Charter Boat Captains,
6 3CU, the Steelheaders. All the local fishing groups
7 and boating groups are on the Lake Erie Advisory
8 Committee. And we - the first meeting we brainstormed
9 a list of projects. And a lot of them wouldn't qualify
10 for the - for the fund - what funds that we have,
11 because right now they're restricted to habitat and
12 access.

13 Pat mentioned fish cleaning stations.
14 The Charter Boat Captains would love to have fish
15 cleaning stations at our marinas so when they come back
16 with their clients they can actually clean their fish
17 and take filets home instead of trying to find a place
18 to clean a fish when they go home. That's an example
19 of a project.

20 We could also reinvest money into the
21 marinas, whether it's the Northeast Marina that we own
22 on the east side of town, the Walnut Creek - or the
23 Walnut Creek Marina that we own on the west side of
24 town. Right now we can't really use those funds
25 because of the restricted access and habitat.

1 The S.O.N.S. just - it would work - they
2 would work with the city on an angler pathway along
3 Presque Isle Bay. The Fish and Boat Commission really
4 couldn't put money towards those kind of projects
5 because we're restricted again to how those funds can
6 be used. So by opening up the scope and breadth of how
7 the funds are used, we can really do a wide diversity
8 of projects that we can't do now.

9 We've got about \$4 million in a
10 restrictive account that's dedicated to be spent on
11 habitat and access. And the fund would be opened.
12 We'd be able to use those funds to work with the
13 boaters and anglers here in Erie County to meet their
14 expectations for other things.

15 MR. MASCHARKA: May I speak?

16 CHAIRMAN GILLESPIE: Sure.

17 MR. MASCHARKA: Commissioner Ed
18 Mascharka. I'll reiterate nothing that John just said
19 because it's all good stuff. Back when I became a
20 Commissioner seven years ago, Blager's Dam was slightly
21 lopsided because it was wholly access and habitat. But
22 as the S.O.N.S. will tell you, there's people that walk
23 to fish. We call them bucket fishermen. We have
24 boaters that fish. And they don't fish streams. They
25 don't fish access points for just Steelhead. And I

1 brought this up to Pat. I know Parke's aware of it.
2 And we talked about it, that they're still paying stamp
3 money with not as much return on their investment. And
4 we feel it is very important and for the last seven
5 years, with John's help, we've made a tremendous impact
6 in the amount of money we've been able to reiterate
7 back to the bucket and boating fishermen so that the
8 people that are just Steelheaders weren't seeing all of
9 the money go only to their area.

10 And I think it's been a wonderful thing.
11 The stamp is an absolutely gem across the whole United
12 States. There are so many states that would love to
13 have an access stamp type fund where it's restricted
14 and only used - John will tell you he meets with other
15 Directors all over the nation, and he finds that - they
16 find out what we have and how much we take in - that
17 stamps recurs almost \$680,000 to \$700,000 every year.
18 We're able to use \$300,000 to \$400,000 of that or \$3
19 million to \$4 million of that to help on the wall
20 anchoring project. And then all this matching money
21 comes back to us through federal or other types of
22 grants. So we're able to use that money other ways
23 that are more efficient. And just being able to take
24 that money and do things to help all those other types
25 of fishermen that aren't strictly using stream access

1 or habitat improvements. And the habitat and resource
2 is so important.

3 The last thing I will say is there's
4 another whole area that came up to the S.O.N.S. and I a
5 few weeks ago. We have new weather buoys that the
6 Regional Science Consortium has got through NOAA. And
7 they only cost \$6,000 or \$8,000 a year to maintain on
8 the water, to launch and do things. That couldn't be
9 helped for. Those buoys can be viewed by anybody in
10 Allegheny County. They're live streaming web video
11 cam, with winds and rain provisions. That's incredibly
12 important to boaters and all the boaters that fish.
13 And I would just add that as my take on the thing.

14 Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN GILLESPIE: Thank you,
16 Commissioner.

17 MR. SKRYPZAK: Can I make a comment?

18 CHAIRMAN GILLESPIE: State your name,
19 please, and where you're from.

20 MR. SKRYPZAK: My name is Jerry
21 Skrypzak. I'm President of the S.O.N.S. of Lake Erie
22 Fishing Club. First I want to welcome you to Erie. We
23 call it the freshwater fishing capital of Pennsylvania.
24 That was done by - John Hornaman passed it through the
25 House of Representatives about five years ago.

1 We were actually at one time considered
2 the freshwater fishing capital of the United - of the
3 world. Lake Erie is probably the most polluted
4 generator of fish. In fact, today I have to laugh, a
5 little thing about the Deadliest Catch and how they
6 fish out of the Aleutian Islands. And they're the
7 capital of the world, and they only caught four million
8 pounds. Well, there were days - or years in Erie where
9 our harvest was in the 25, 30 million pound category.

10 Lake Erie has been, like I said, it also
11 generates not only a lot of fish but a lot of revenue
12 in town. Our commercial fishing industry has faded a
13 little bit. It still is active, but it has faded. But
14 it has been taken over by sport fishermen like
15 ourselves.

16 And the Lake Erie stamp is nothing new.
17 As fishermen, we've been paying it since 1994. It's
18 not like you're adding a new burden to the fishermen or
19 to the people that buy this. The stamp is there. The
20 only thing is we see that there's probably an
21 opportunity to use some of these moneys to improve that
22 fisher that's out there. We only limit it by our
23 imagination.

24 John has set up a committee. We've had
25 input and other groups have had inputs in it. And if

1 we can use this money to generate more business and
2 more fish and more fund, we really think it would be
3 helpful to not only Erie but to the people who travel
4 and do the same fishing. Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN GILLESPIE: Thank you for your
6 comments, sir.

7 Any other questions from members? Sir?

8 MR. ALI: My name is Rocco Ali,
9 Pennsylvania Fish Commission. I'd just like to say
10 that by expanding this bill you're going to help a lot
11 of my constituents and Al's constituents out of
12 Allegheny County because to be able to get, as Ed
13 pointed out, a good weather report before you travel
14 130 miles is priceless.

15 And I think the other thing that happens
16 is Erie's economy is only going to grow by expanding
17 this fund. And by that I mean if we took fish cleaning
18 stations in, we're going to get more visitors up here.
19 So I'd like to see it expanded. And I'm sure that the
20 reserve fund, John - not our reserve, but the reserve
21 that's in the restricted fund can be utilized quite
22 well and to help the finances of not only fishermen but
23 of Pennsylvania. Thank you.

24 COMMISSIONER HARKINS: Mr. Chairman,
25 just one more comment from John Oliver from Visit Erie.

1 MR. OLIVER: Thank you. I'm John Oliver
2 with Visit Erie. And I just want to comment that, as
3 an organization whose responsibility it is to promote
4 all of Erie County for visitation and tourism, that the
5 real growth in the sport of fishing here has been from
6 people from outside the county that are attracted here
7 because of what we have. And the bill that's proposed
8 will only enhance our product. And as we enhance the
9 product, we believe that we'll see an increase in - a
10 continued increase in visitors coming in to utilize the
11 fisheries that we have. So we strongly support the
12 opportunity that this bill will give this community,
13 the county, to improve its fishery.

14 CHAIRMAN GILLESPIE: Thank you for your
15 good statement.

16 Anyone else? Seeing none,
17 Representative Harkins, thank you so much. I know you
18 - you can stick around as long as you wish, but you do
19 have other commitments.

20 REPRESENTATIVE HARKINS: I have to
21 venture out into Mr. Sonney's district and put some
22 fires out there.

23 CHAIRMAN GILLESPIE: Well, thank you
24 very much.

25 With that, we'll move on to the next

1 item on the agenda. I know you were waiting for
2 somebody, but maybe you can go ahead and get started.

3 House Bill 1409.

4 REPRESENTATIVE WENTLING: So House Bill
5 1409 is titled Reduced Fee Hunting Licenses for
6 Non-Resident Disabled Veterans. So in essence, what
7 this bill will do, and I can read some more
8 description, is it will allow disabled veterans, 60
9 percent or greater, a reduced hunting license fee to
10 help in Pennsylvania. Oh, yes, it does have a - so
11 I'll go ahead and read the details of the bill. The
12 legislation within Title 34 allowing for the extension
13 of a reduced fee for hunting and furtaking license to
14 nonresident disabled veteran and former prisoners of
15 war. So under current law, a Pennsylvania veteran
16 who's a hundred percent disabled or who has lost the
17 use of one or more limbs due to service in the military
18 is eligible for a free hunting and furtaking license.

19 Prisoners of war and those veterans who
20 possess a disabled rating between 60 to 99 percent due
21 to an injury incurred during service are eligible for
22 hunting or furtaking license at the cost of one dollar.
23 So this bill, if passed, would allow that to be applied
24 to non-Pennsylvania residents.

25 So non-profit organizations such as the

1 Waterfowlers for Lawyers, specifically a gentleman by
2 the name of Scott Klein, actually contacted Senator
3 Scott Hutchinson's office about this specific issue.
4 Unfortunately, Scott wasn't able to join us at this
5 point - this evening. He's going to talk a little bit
6 about his organization, which is Waterfowlers for
7 Lawyers.

8 But this bill has actually been
9 introduced also in the Senate as Senate Bill 240 by
10 Senator Scott Hutchinson from Venango County and many
11 other parts of many other counties, I believe Butler,
12 Warren and maybe some more. But anyway, what's great
13 about this is that this bill has actually had a vote in
14 the Senate and it's actually made its way through the
15 Senate to Game and Fish Committee. So it's actually
16 been vetted in the Senate, which is going to be a
17 bonus.

18 So the nonprofit organization, such as
19 Waterfowlers for Lawyers, which offer hunting
20 opportunities to wounded veterans - and I've talked to
21 Scott specifically about what they do, and I'll explain
22 it here in a moment, is they incur the high cost when
23 obtaining license to bring those new veterans into
24 Pennsylvania. So what I understand that they do is
25 they bring a gentleman and perhaps ladies, bring them

1 into an area in Venango County just outside of
2 Crawford, a place that I represent, which is in
3 Crawford County, and they basically do this. They have
4 an opportunity to do it just like they do it in the
5 military and they do waterfowl hunting. And this will
6 give them an opportunity to come in and gather, and
7 they bring them in from all over the country. I
8 believe they've had even folks from Alaska, so -.

9 And I did want to give a couple
10 recognitions here very quickly. And I believe there
11 are a couple folks here who need a chance to speak yet,
12 and I certainly don't want to take over the Chairman's
13 job in doing this, but I did want to recognize Mike
14 Nerozzi is here from the Joint Legislative Conservation
15 Committee. He's come up to join us for the hearing.
16 Senator Scott Hutchinson is the Chairman of that
17 specific committee. It's a bipartisan, bicameral
18 committee that I'm a member of.

19 Also, Justin Leventry's here. He had to
20 take a quick phone call, but he's coming back. Justin
21 - unfortunately, Senator Hutchinson wasn't able to be
22 here to join us this evening, but Justin is the Chief
23 of Staff for Senator Hutchinson. And also my Chief of
24 Staff, Vicki Leap, who is here this evening, too, from
25 Conneaut Lake, so -.

1 There are a number of other folks that
2 are here, too. We know that Regis Senko is here from
3 the Game Commission. I know there's a gentleman here
4 from the Governor's office. If you don't mind, please,
5 saying your name.

6 MR. WILLIAMS: Don Williams from the
7 Governor's Advisory Council.

8 REPRESENTATIVE WENTLING: Thanks. And
9 these two fine gentlemen in the back are from the Fish
10 and Boat. Do you guys want to introduce yourselves?

11 MR. BABROSKY: I'm Matt Babrosky. I
12 cover currently central Erie and western Erie.

13 SERGEANT SMALKO: Sergeant Jim Smalko.
14 I'm the Assistant Region Supervisor for the northwest.

15 REPRESENTATIVE WENTLING: Excellent.
16 Excellent. Anyone else here that would like to
17 introduce this evening? John and Ed I believe already
18 introduced themselves. Very good.

19 So any questions at all? Is that
20 correct?

21 CHAIRMAN GILLESPIE: Any questions of
22 Representative Wentling and his -?

23 REPRESENTATIVE ENGLISH: So just I'm
24 curious. The progress of the Senate, has there been
25 pushback, objections and concerns raised?

1 REPRESENTATIVE WENTLING: No. I believe
2 - Justin can answer this question perhaps better when
3 he comes back in the room. It's my understanding it
4 passed unanimously. It went unanimously through the
5 Senate.

6 And I may also add, too, if this helps
7 at all, is that I have a number of co-sponsorships. I
8 know, the Cathy Lap is a sponsor. Lee James, who is a
9 State Rep, this gentleman is a sponsor. But I also was
10 able to garner the co-sponsorship of our majority
11 leader which I guess is pretty rare, and also speak
12 with House Rep Turzai. So I'm pretty proud of that.

13 REPRESENTATIVE ENGLISH:
14 Congratulations.

15 REPRESENTATIVE WENTLING: Thank you very
16 much. You specifically asked, so - anyone else? And
17 Al here's a veteran, so -.

18 CHAIRMAN GILLESPIE: Representative
19 Wentling, maybe in your comments you mentioned it, but
20 how many other states offer similar type legislation or
21 similar type -?

22 REPRESENTATIVE WENTLING: I actually
23 don't know the answer. Greg, do you -?

24 I'm not certain. I do know that Brian
25 Ellis has somewhat of a similar bill and is able to

1 give amendment to Representative Karen Boback's bill.
2 It was going to comprise in reciprocity, which I think
3 was a completely new concept. That would have been a
4 completely new concept. This one, I'm not certain. I
5 just don't know that answer.

6 MR. RAFFENSPERGER: That was for
7 reciprocity between us and other states for active duty
8 military. In other words, to allow the Attorney
9 General to work with other states and determine if
10 their laws are similar to ours. And if they are and
11 they would enter in an agreement with us and they
12 provide a benefit to our residents, we would provide
13 the same benefit to their residents on the licensing.

14 And Representative Brian Ellis had a
15 similar bill that included disabled veterans.

16 REPRESENTATIVE WENTLING: Just in time,
17 Justin. Does anybody have a question?

18 MR. LEVENTRY: I'm Justin from Senator
19 Hutchinson's office.

20 REPRESENTATIVE WENTLING: I already took
21 care of that for you. Okay.

22 So do you have any idea - you know, it's
23 not like we're not putting you on the spot here but do
24 you have any idea if there's any other states in the
25 Union that have a similar program that would be

1 provided?

2 MR. LEVENTRY: A similar program?

3 REPRESENTATIVE WENTLING: Not a program
4 but anyone else, you know, who allows for out-of-state
5 reduced hunting licenses?

6 MR. LEVENTRY: Reciprocity?

7 REPRESENTATIVE WENTLING: Without
8 reciprocity.

9 MR. LEVENTRY: That's a great question.

10 REPRESENTATIVE WENTLING: Thank you,
11 Justin.

12 CHAIRMAN GILLESPIE: Again, I applaud
13 your initiative. You're the first in the nation to do
14 so, Representative.

15 REPRESENTATIVE WENTLING: Hey, well,
16 Senator Hutchinson - let's see.

17 Well, I guess it depends on the
18 graciousness of the Chairman on the bills.

19 CHAIRMAN GILLESPIE: Well, as you so
20 well noted a few minutes ago, I don't think we can
21 thank our veterans enough. And Representative English,
22 thank you for our service. And I think anything we can
23 do for those that have served our country, discount,
24 free, whatever it may be, that's a way to say thank
25 you.

1 Representative Sonney, I understand you
2 have a question.

3 REPRESENTATIVE SONNEY: Yeah. I was
4 just - thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was just curious if
5 any other organizations have appeared, you know, since
6 the bill was introduced and that, you know, you didn't
7 know were out there that we're throwing your support
8 behind?

9 REPRESENTATIVE WENTLING: Not that I'm
10 aware of personally. I do know that - I do know of a
11 specific organization - you know, this bill was, you
12 know, spawned in the Senate. This would be to the
13 legislation.

14 And Justin, not to put you on the spot
15 again, but are you aware of any organizations in
16 specific that would -?

17 MR. LEVENTRY: I believe there's a
18 similar organization in Potter County. I'm drawing a
19 blank, but I do know that they also offer hunting trips
20 to wounded veterans and I'm pretty sure that are
21 supportive of the program.

22 REPRESENTATIVE WENTLING: It's likely
23 we'll potentially find other organizations that are
24 doing this.

25 And one of the questions that has been

1 proposed is the amount perhaps of veterans that this
2 will apply to and nonresidents - and nonresident. And
3 you had had some numbers perhaps. Greg?

4 MR. RAFFENSPERGER: There was some
5 initial concerns about what it might cost the Game
6 Commission in licensing dollars. And both the
7 Commission and we feel that it's just going to be very,
8 very minimal. In fact, it might even be a bonus for
9 them because we have currently - when you're talking
10 about adult hunters in Pennsylvania, less than five
11 percent of those are disabled veteran - or I'm sorry,
12 less than half - one-half percent of those are disabled
13 veterans. So when you're talking about people that
14 will be coming in from surrounding states, you're not
15 talking about a great number of people. And even if we
16 do get more people, these licenses that are 60 to 99
17 percent disabled and former POWs, those licenses that
18 carry a one-dollar cost are eligible for federal
19 matching funds.

20 REPRESENTATIVE WENTLING: Which is
21 approximately \$20 million.

22 MR. RAFFENSPERGER: Right. Thanks to
23 the Obama Administration.

24 So it's not something that would be
25 financially harmful to the Commission.

1 REPRESENTATIVE WENTLING: And I guess
2 one thing I would add to that in regards to the
3 Pennsylvania Game Commission, and I have spoken to the
4 - I guess it would be Executive Director - is that his
5 title? I've spoken to the Director and I've shared
6 with him - willing to provide support of the bill not
7 mutual, not negative, but actually support the bill.

8 MR. LEVENTRY: That's my understanding.
9 And the other organizations I believe
10 are located in Potter County, the fishers -.

11 REPRESENTATIVE WENTLING: You say
12 believe those organizations?

13 MR. LEVENTRY: Similar organizations
14 offer funds for veterans.

15 REPRESENTATIVE WENTLING: One final
16 thing?

17 CHAIRMAN GILLESPIE: It's your show.

18 REPRESENTATIVE WENTLING: Thank you,
19 Keith.

20 So I did want to take a moment, we're
21 here at the American Legion and to be able to discuss
22 the bills before us and the veterans that - hunting -
23 hunters and the hunting bill and also here in Erie with
24 the - perhaps to the program. So I just want to thank
25 the American Legion. So thank you, Chairman.

1 CHAIRMAN GILLESPIE: Thank you,
2 Representative. Acting Chairman Madden?

3 CHAIRMAN MADDEN: Just on the
4 reciprocity question that was discussed in detail.

5 CHAIRMAN GILLESPIE: Well, with that, I
6 think - before we get ready to wrap things up here, of
7 course, we're aware of the budget situation in
8 Harrisburg. I know that we were getting close to the
9 end of that deal, and I look forward to getting these
10 bills scheduled and brought out, along with some other
11 things that we've been waiting on, because simply the
12 budget has sucked all the oxygen out of the room, and
13 which - and rightly so, that needs to be done and
14 completed. So hopefully, that will be done soon and we
15 can move forward with some of these other great
16 initiatives.

17 Again, I congratulate you,
18 Representative Harkins and Representative Wentling, for
19 taking the initiative to move forward with this and
20 being such an advocate for it.

21 Again, a beautiful venue. Thank you for
22 that. And unless there's anything else from anyone
23 else, we'll go ahead and close the meeting.

24 MR. KISSELL: One request,
25 Representative Sonney. My name is Ed Kissell, Mr.

1 Sonney, and I believe that you have seen me down in
2 Harrisburg. You have one of our wooly mammoths. You
3 know what that is, a large elephant that was found in
4 Lake Pleasant in the Representative's area.

5 We're having a facsimile of it put in
6 our Greet Center to draw tourists from the State of
7 Pennsylvania, but you have it captive in the historical
8 preservation building down in Harrisburg.

9 REPRESENTATIVE SONNEY: It's a museum.

10 MR. KISSELL: So Representative Sonney
11 knows all about it, and whatever funds it would match,
12 moneys for the Fish Commission, and it's an animal, so
13 the hunting people probably killed it thousands of
14 years ago. We'd enjoy seeing something like that up
15 here in Erie.

16 CHAIRMAN GILLESPIE: Now, is this over
17 in the State Museum or where is this?

18 MR. KISSELL: Mr. Sonney can tell you.

19 REPRESENTATIVE SONNEY: It's the State
20 Museum.

21 MR. KISSELL: It's in a preserved room
22 because of the -

23 CHAIRMAN GILLESPIE: Sure.

24 MR. KISSELL: - it's about 13,000 years
25 old.

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REPRESENTATIVE SONNEY: Let me know. We

can walk over.

CHAIRMAN GILLESPIE: I do. I want to go

over there.

REPRESENTATIVE SONNEY: I haven't been

over to see it.

CHAIRMAN GILLESPIE: On some of these

long session days, Representative Wentling, if he

doesn't shave, can look like a wooly mammoth.

With that, anybody else have a comment?

Thank you so much for setting this up

and the Legion for allowing us to be here.

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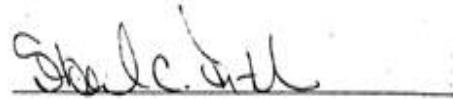
HEARING CONCLUDED AT 5:18 P.M.

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CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify, as the stenographic reporter,
that the foregoing proceedings were taken
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