

By: Representatives Gunn, Arnold, Miles

To: Wildlife, Fisheries and
Parks; Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 1577

1 AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO OFFER A COURSE
2 IN HUNTER SAFETY AS A COMPONENT OF ITS CURRICULUM FOR STUDENTS IN
3 GRADES 7 THROUGH 12; TO PRESCRIBE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE COURSE
4 INSTRUCTOR; TO PROHIBIT THE USE OF OPERABLE WEAPONS AND LIVE
5 AMMUNITION IN THE COURSE; TO AUTHORIZE PARENTS TO OPT OUT A
6 STUDENT'S PARTICIPATION IN THE COURSE; TO AMEND SECTION 49-7-20,
7 MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, IN CONFORMITY THERETO; AND FOR RELATED
8 PURPOSES.

9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

10 **SECTION 1.** (1) Beginning in the 2020-2021 school year, each
11 school district may offer a course on hunter safety as a component
12 of its curriculum during the day, or as part of an after-school
13 program for students in Grades 7 through 12. The State Board of
14 Education, in consultation with the Mississippi Department of
15 Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks, may prepare and make available to
16 school boards resources on hunter safety that may be used as
17 guidelines for the development of courses authorized under this
18 section.

19 (2) The hunter safety course must be designed to expose
20 students to firearm safety and to provide, at a minimum,
21 instruction in:



- 22 (a) The capabilities of firearms;
- 23 (b) Respecting and handling firearms responsibly; and
- 24 (c) Managing and controlling firearms.

25 (3) The hunter safety course must be taught by a well

26 trained individual who is credentialed to provide instruction in

27 the safe handling of firearms. The school district may arrange

28 for any employee of the district or alternatively, an individual

29 who is not employed by the district, to teach the hunter safety

30 course, provided that the person administering the instruction

31 holds certification or another credential that evidences the

32 person's training to provide firearms safety instruction.

33 (4) The hunter safety course required under this section may

34 not be construed to authorize a student, school district employee,

35 firearms safety instructor or any other person who is not

36 otherwise permitted by law or school board policy to carry a

37 weapon on school property or possess a firearm on school property.

38 In training students to handle firearms properly, operable weapons

39 and live ammunition may not be used. Access by any person to the

40 inoperable weapons and ammunition used in the course must be

41 limited to those times that students are in class under the

42 supervision of both the firearms safety instructor and physical

43 education teacher.

44 (5) No less than one (1) week before the course required

45 under this section is scheduled to be taught, the school district

46 must provide written notice to the parents of those students. The



47 notice must inform the parents that a hunter safety course,
48 including training in the proper handling of firearms, will be
49 taught to students as part of the physical education class. The
50 notice must advise parents of the right and the appropriate
51 process to review the materials to be used in the course. Upon
52 the request of any parent, the school must excuse the parent's
53 child from the hunter safety course without detriment to the
54 student.

55 **SECTION 2.** Section 49-7-20, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
56 amended as follows:

57 49-7-20. (1) It is unlawful for any person born on or after
58 January 1, 1972, to procure any Mississippi hunting license,
59 except a resident apprentice hunting license and a resident
60 combination small game hunting and fishing license, unless the
61 person has been issued certification of satisfactory completion of
62 a hunter education course approved by the department.

63 (2) It is unlawful for any person to issue any Mississippi
64 hunting license, except a resident apprentice hunting license and
65 resident combination small game hunting and fishing license, to
66 any person born on or after January 1, 1972, unless the purchaser
67 has provided valid certification of satisfactory completion of a
68 hunter education course approved by the department.

69 (3) It is unlawful for any person to fraudulently obtain a
70 hunter education certification.



71 (4) The department may revoke any hunting license or hunter
72 education certification upon determination that the holder was not
73 entitled to issuance or obtained the license or certification by
74 any fraudulent means.

75 (5) It is unlawful for any person born on or after January
76 1, 1972, to hunt with a resident combination small game hunting
77 and fishing license, unless the person has been issued
78 certification of satisfactory completion of a hunter education
79 course approved by the department.

80 (6) The hunter education course required for purposes of
81 licensure shall be deemed to be satisfied by any student who
82 enrolls in and successfully completes a school-based hunter safety
83 course provided in accordance with Section 1 of this act.

84 **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
85 and after July 1, 2020.

