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SENATE BILL 6515

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State of Washington

64th Legislature

2016 Regular Session

By Senator O'Ban

Read first time 01/22/16. Referred to Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to an elective firearms safety and hunter  
2 education course for high school students; amending RCW 77.32.155;  
3 and adding a new section to chapter 28A.230 RCW.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** A new section is added to chapter 28A.230  
6 RCW to read as follows:

7 (1)(a) The superintendent of public instruction, in consultation  
8 with the department of fish and wildlife, must develop a program of  
9 instruction for firearms safety and hunter education for students in  
10 grades nine through twelve that satisfies the hunting license  
11 prerequisite requirements of RCW 77.32.155. The program of  
12 instruction must be developed according to a schedule that provides  
13 school districts with sufficient time to adopt the program for the  
14 2017-18 school year. In developing the program of instruction, the  
15 superintendent of public instruction should seek partnerships with  
16 public and private entities for the purpose of minimizing costs  
17 associated with its development and implementation.

18 (b) The program of instruction must include a firearms safety and  
19 hunter education component, and a civics component that examines the  
20 Constitution of the United States with an emphasis on the Bill of  
21 Rights. The academic rigor of the civics component must exceed that

1 of the compulsory study requirements established in RCW 28A.230.170  
2 for the Constitution of the United States.

3 (2)(a) Beginning with the 2017-18 school year, any school  
4 district may adopt the program developed under this section as an  
5 elective one-half credit course to instruct students in grades nine  
6 through twelve, or grades ten through twelve if grade nine is not  
7 offered at the high school, in the content area addressed by the  
8 curriculum. To the extent practicable, the firearms safety and hunter  
9 education component of the program must be taught:

10 (i) By hunter education instructors authorized by the department  
11 of fish and wildlife under RCW 77.32.155; and

12 (ii) At a local firearms range selected by the applicable school  
13 district that has elected to make its facilities, property, or both  
14 available to students either free of charge or at a reduced rate.

15 (b) A school district may provide additional instruction that  
16 supplements the program developed under this section.

17 (c) School districts adopting the program developed under this  
18 section are encouraged to seek partnerships with public and private  
19 entities for the purpose of minimizing costs to students  
20 participating in a firearms safety and hunter education course.

21 **Sec. 2.** RCW 77.32.155 and 2013 c 23 s 243 are each amended to  
22 read as follows:

23 (1)(a) When purchasing any hunting license, persons under the age  
24 of eighteen shall present certification of completion of a course of  
25 instruction of at least ten hours in the safe handling of firearms,  
26 safety, conservation, and sporting/hunting behavior. All persons  
27 purchasing any hunting license for the first time, if born after  
28 January 1, 1972, shall present such certification.

29 (b)(i) The director may establish a program for training persons  
30 in the safe handling of firearms, conservation, and sporting/hunting  
31 behavior and shall prescribe the type of instruction and the  
32 qualifications of the instructors. The director shall, as part of  
33 establishing the training program, exempt members of the United  
34 States military from the firearms skills portion of any instruction  
35 course completed over the internet.

36 (ii) The director may cooperate with the national rifle  
37 association, organized sports/outdoor enthusiasts' groups, or other  
38 public or private organizations when establishing the training  
39 program.

1        (iii) The director may cooperate and partner with the  
2 superintendent of public instruction and school districts in their  
3 implementation of section 1 of this act and the provision of hunter  
4 education training opportunities offered as part of the public school  
5 curriculum.

6        (c) Upon the successful completion of a course established under  
7 this section, the trainee shall receive a hunter education  
8 certificate signed by an authorized instructor. The certificate is  
9 evidence of compliance with this section.

10        (d) The director may accept certificates from other states that  
11 persons have successfully completed firearm safety, hunter education,  
12 or similar courses as evidence of compliance with this section.

13        (2)(a) The director may authorize a once in a lifetime, one  
14 license year deferral of hunter education training for individuals  
15 who are accompanied by a nondeferred Washington-licensed hunter who  
16 has held a Washington hunting license for the prior three years and  
17 is over eighteen years of age. The commission shall adopt rules for  
18 the administration of this subsection to avoid potential fraud and  
19 abuse.

20        (b) The director is authorized to collect an application fee, not  
21 to exceed twenty dollars, for obtaining the once in a lifetime, one  
22 license year deferral of hunter education training from the  
23 department. This fee must be deposited into the fish and wildlife  
24 enforcement reward account and must be used exclusively to administer  
25 the deferral program created in this subsection.

26        (c) For the purposes of this subsection, "accompanied" means to  
27 go along with another person while staying within a range of the  
28 other person that permits continual unaided visual and auditory  
29 communication.

30        (3) To encourage the participation of an adequate number of  
31 instructors for the training program, the commission shall develop  
32 nonmonetary incentives available to individuals who commit to serving  
33 as an instructor. The incentives may include additional hunting  
34 opportunities for instructors.

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