

**REVENUE:** No revenue impact

**FISCAL:** Fiscal statement issued

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**Action:** Do Pass as Amended and Be Printed Engrossed

**Vote:** 4 - 0 - 1

**Yeas:** Atkinson, Bates, Beyer, Avakian

**Nays:** 0

**Exc.:** Prozanski

**Prepared By:** Sue Marshall, Administrator

**Meeting Dates:** 4/3

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**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:** Directs the State Fish and Wildlife Commission to establish by rule a youth hunter mentoring program. Declares an emergency and is effective on passage.

**ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

- Declining participation rates of young hunters
- Effectiveness of mentoring programs in recruiting new hunters
- Safety concerns

**EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:** Changes the eligibility age of participants in the youth hunter mentoring program to those who are between the ages of nine and fourteen. Declares an emergency, effective on passage.

**BACKGROUND:** The Department of Fish and Wildlife has experienced a decline in issuance of hunting and angling licenses during recent years. Proponents of Senate Bill 892-A believe a youth hunter mentoring program will encourage participation in hunting among youth and expand the base of future hunting and fishing enthusiasts.

Senate Bill 892-A allows persons nine to fourteen years of age to hunt big game when they are accompanied by a supervisory hunter who is 21 years of age or older and who holds the appropriate licenses, tags or permits. The measure specifies that only one lawful hunting weapon may be carried during a supervised hunt. The person participating in the supervised hunt may hunt wildlife under the same conditions applicable to the supervisory hunter's licenses, tags and permits. The measure allows the commission to adopt rules that prescribe any relevant safety and ethical standards for a supervised hunt.