



New York State Conservation Council Inc.
8 East Main Street, Ilion, New York 13357-1899

MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

Bill #	A 4519 Goodell	No same as
	A 4699 Magee	No same as
	S 3708 Ranzenhofer	No same as

Title: Establish the minimum age and circumstances for juveniles to possess rifles, shotguns and air guns.

These proposals would set the minimum age at which individuals are permitted to use rifles, shotguns and air guns under supervised conditions at ten. This would bring New York in line with the rest of the nation and permit New York residents age ten and up to participate in national competitive programs designed for this age group.

Justification:

Sound training is the single greatest measure that we can take to further firearms safety. Providing the means and environment for instilling safe handling practices ensures the welfare of everyone. This legislation would allow young shooters to acquire the requisite skills and safe habits at an early age while participating in supervised programs prior to entering the fields as hunters.

Juniors can hunt small game with firearms at twelve years of age and big game with a bow at fourteen. The DEC's current five-year deer management plan calls for the big game age to be lowered to twelve, bringing New York in line with all other states. It makes a great deal of sense that individuals who are going to be legally hunting be given training and encouraged to develop the firearms handling skills required for safe hunting before they go afield.

This change would also allow individuals to participate in national competitive shooting programs developed for this age group. Participation in both local and national sports shooting programs builds character and preserves our heritage. These activities are sponsored not only by shooting sports organizations but by the Boy Scouts, 4H and the American Legion.

Studies and statistics show that young hunters are among the safest groups afield. The early training of our youth in the safe and responsible handling of firearms and their participation in local and national sports shooting programs is the foundation of firearms safety both in the field and on the range.

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