

Legislative Analysis



MODEL FIREARMS SAFETY COURSE

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<http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa>

House Bill 4285 as introduced
Sponsor: Rep. Curt S. VanderWall
Committee: Natural Resources and Tourism
Complete to 5-13-25

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

SUMMARY:

House Bill 4285 would amend the Revised School Code to require the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to work with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to make a model program of firearm safety instruction available to schools as an elective course for students. The course would be for students in grades 6 to 12 and would have to be at least eight hours long, with the content of the course matching the safe firearms handling course requirements in section 43543 of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act (NREPA). The course would have to be taught by an individual who has been certified as a hunter safety instructor by the DNR. Firearms or ammunition could not be brought into a school building as part of the firearm safety instruction.

The firearm safety instruction would have to include at least the following topics:

- Proper usage and handling of firearms.
- Safe cleaning and maintenance of firearms.
- Different types of firearms.
- Safe hunting practices.

The course could be provided as an optional extracurricular class for any pupil in grades 6 to 12 in a school district, intermediate school district (ISD), or public school academy (PSA), or as part of an existing course for the purpose of teaching self-expression and enjoyment of recreational activity. A student whose school provides firearm safety instruction could be excused from attending it, without penalty, upon their request or the request of their parent or legal guardian.

The bill would also provide that successful completion of the course would satisfy the hunter safety course required to obtain a Michigan hunting license, as specified in section 43520 of NREPA.

Proposed MCL 380.1163a

FISCAL IMPACT:

House Bill 4285 could create costs to the state and would have no fiscal impact on units of local government.

The Michigan Department of Education, in consultation with the Department of Natural Resources, would be required to adopt and make available to schools a model program of firearm safety instruction. MDE has noted that costs would be minimal, as the department would be adopting existing materials, not developing new materials.

The bill is likely to increase costs for the DNR by requiring it to consult with MDE to adopt and make available to schools a program of firearm safety instruction. The extent of this cost increase is unclear at present, as such a program has yet to be established and the number of schools choosing to use the program has yet to be determined. These costs are likely to be covered by DNR's extant funding, as the bill does not include additional resources for program development or implementation. Departmental funding totals \$534.6 million Gross (\$76.8 million GF/GP) and 2,545.6 FTE positions for FY 2024-25. Wildlife Division and Law Enforcement Division address most firearm-related functions; these divisions' funding totals \$48.5 million Gross (\$4.6 million GF/GP) and 230.5 FTE positions and \$54.9 million Gross (\$19.8 million GF/GP) and 298.0 FTE positions respectively for FY 2024-25.

The bill would have no fiscal impact on local school districts, PSAs, or ISDs, since the bill allows, but does not require, schools to provide the firearm safety instruction to students.

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