Testimony in support of H.B. 4371

This bill has success written all over it for the state of Michigan. Not only will it get more kids out of the house and into the great outdoors, but it will reinforce the value of our natural resources to kids and adults alike.

It also makes it affordable in an economy that begs for a "deal". With every mentor purchasing a license, it will make a way for a youth to learn what makes Michigan a "go to place" for people across this great nation.

I grew up hunting and fish with my dad, grandfather and uncle and can't imagine this heritage being lost to video games and cell phones.

Help me keep the vision alive by passing this bill out of committee and supporting it through the process.

Mike Thiede

Michigan Gun Owners

Michigan Duck Hunters Association

Pennsylvania's Mentored Youth Hunting Program

A model for improved hunter recruitment and safety

About the Program

In 2005, Pennsylvania enacted legislation authorizing the state's Game Commission to create the *Mentored Youth Hunting Program*

Guidelines for the Program established by the Pennsylvania Game Commission:

- The Program is available to minor youth hunters under age 12
- Mentor must be at least 21 years of age
- Mentor must possess a valid Hunting License
- Mentored youth hunters must possess a special permit, which is good for small game hunting and includes kill tags for an antlered deer and spring gobbler
- Mentor must possess firearm until a stationary position is reached, when youth must be arm's length away from mentor
- No more than one mentored youth per mentor and one firearm per group at any one time during the hunt

↑ Hunter Recruitment

The *Mentored Youth Hunting Program* is succeeding by introducing more kids to hunting

- ***2009-10*** – 28,542 more youth hunters entered the woods in Pennsylvania
- ***2010-11*** – 28,748 Permits have already been sold before the State's spring turkey season has been taken into effect.

Compare to Michigan

- Michigan currently has the <u>worst</u> hunter recruitment and retention rate in the country
- Out of every 100 hunters that leave the field in Michigan, only 26 replace them

Safety

- The *Mentored Youth Hunting Program* in Pennsylvania was broadly supported by Hunter Safety instructors
- Since the program's inception, Hunter Safety instructors have approved the *Mentored Youth Hunting Program* because students are generally more prepared and aware of safe practices while taking Hunter Safety because of their Mentored hunting experience (PA Game Commission)
- According to the PA Game Commission Staff, the Mentored Youth Mentor Program is helping to cure bad hunting habits by youngsters with the program's strict guidelines