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WISCONSIN INSTITUTE
FOR LAW & LIBERTY

WILL Sues DNR For Illegally Cancelling In-Person Hunter Safety Courses

State agency cancels all in-person courses citing COVID-19

The News: The Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty (WILL), on behalf of [Hunter Nation](#) and Hunter Nation President and CEO Luke Hilgemann, filed a [lawsuit](#) against the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) after the agency adopted a policy, illegally, that cancels all in-person hunter education courses in Wisconsin as a result of COVID-19. The lawsuit, filed in Marathon County Circuit Court, results from the publicity surrounding the DNR's cancellation of an in-person hunter education course scheduled for June 22, 2020 in Oneida County.

Background: All Wisconsin hunters born after January 1, 1973 must take a hunter education course before obtaining a hunting license. But DNR has adopted a policy that bans in-person hunter education courses. Further, DNR has said they will not issue certificates to anyone who completes such an in-person course.

The DNR's 'Go Wild' [website](#), a portal that guides prospective hunters to enroll in hunter education courses, says in part, "In light of COVID 19 and the Safer at Home order, all DNR sponsored in-person recreational safety classes and R3 events are canceled for the duration of the public health emergency."

The Lawsuit: WILL's lawsuit challenges the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' policy because it conflicts with state law and was adopted illegally. WILL's suit contends:

- The DNR lacks the authority to unilaterally eliminate in-person hunter education courses.
- Even if DNR had the authority, the agency would have to follow the rulemaking process proscribed in state law.
- DNR's policy relies on the 'Safer at Home' order, no longer in effect as a result of a Supreme Court decision in *Legislature v. Palm*.

- The Wisconsin state constitution provides a 'right to hunt.' DNR's policy violates the Wisconsin constitution by imposing unjustified burdens on Wisconsinites seeking to legally exercise their right.

The Quotes: Deputy Counsel Lucas Vebber said, "The DNR's decision to cancel all in-person hunter education courses occurred without justification or public input. Unfortunately, this is just another example of Evers administration agencies' illegally creating, adopting, and enforcing policy."

"Hunter Nation stands ready to protect and defend our hunting rights and heritage against all threats," added Luke Hilgemann President/CEO of Hunter Nation. "We thank the team at Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty for partnering with us to pursue legal action against the Department of Natural Resources for a clear violation of our constitutionally protected right to hunt by cancelling hunter education courses that are required for new hunters to take up the sport and pursue our outdoor traditions."

Read More:

- [WILL's Complaint on Behalf of Hunter Nation](#), June 2020