

House: No licenses for immigrants;

Georgia representatives vote to keep hunting, fishing permits out of hands of noncitizens.;

2001 GEORGIA LEGISLATURE

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Body

Keep that sign on the **hunting** lodge door: **No immigrants** allowed.

That's the word from the **Georgia House** of **Representatives**, which killed a proposal to let **noncitizens** buy **hunting** and **fishing licenses**. Some legislators who wanted to open the fields and streams to all were bewildered by opposition in a state with an increasing foreign-born population.

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"I find it offensive. I find it narrow and provincial," said Rep. Nan Grogran Orrock (D-Atlanta). "It's xenophobic. That's what it is."

But Rep. Steve Stancil (R-Canton), who led the charge against that proposal, warned that illegal **immigrants** might snap up **hunting** and **fishing licenses** and flash them to enter the **voting** booth.

"It's a possibility," he said.

State law says only U.S. citizens can buy **hunting** and **fishing licenses**. The **Georgia** Department of Natural Resources wanted **immigrants** to buy **licenses** so it could get more money to buy land and manage populations of white-tailed deer, wood ducks and other animals.

The department supported a bill that would have, among many other things, let **immigrants** stalk wild turkeys and angle for large-mouth bass.

State law says only U.S. citizens can register to **vote**. Applicants must give a Social Security number, something most illegal **immigrants** lack, and it's a felony to register if you know you're unqualified or you deliberately supply false information.

Nonetheless, the **House** agreed with Stancil on Monday by a **vote** of 94-69. Because the Senate has passed a bill allowing **immigrants** to get **hunting** and **fishing licenses**, a committee from both chambers will try to reconcile the differences.

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Regardless of what the law says, authorities say clerks in tackle shops and discount stores are unlikely to grill applicants about their citizenship or immigration status. That's why Rep. Barbara Mobley (D-Decatur) doesn't understand the reluctance of her colleagues to tweak state law.

"I couldn't believe it," she said. "You're talking about a bunch of paranoid people."

Graphic

Photo:

Rep. Steve Stancil rallied **House** members against the proposal.

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