

From: Jeremy D. Martinez (Twist of Fate)

Subj: In support of Bill #1151

To whom it may concern,

I was asked to write this letter in regard to a pending Bill that will eliminate the baiting of Deer in ND. As a resident of MN I know very well what it means to not bait deer. I have never personally harvested a deer over bait, but due to the proximity of states I am intimately familiar with hunting deer over a bait site.

The Twist of Fate annual hunt is a hunt specifically designed for Physically Challenged hunters. Each year we put together the event with many volunteers and several donations to host 12 hunters that would likely never have a chance to hunt and harvest a deer. I would like to take the next few minutes to share with you a few experiences I've had while guiding and volunteering at this hunt.

Back in 2007 I had the privilege of guiding my first hunter, he was a Navy Veteran with a cancerous brain tumor, doctors were unsure if he'd live another year. I brought him out to Kindred, ND for the ToF Hunt from Minneapolis Mn and he harvest his first ever deer....and sadly his last and only deer.

In 2019 I flew back from California to guide a special guest, my grandfather. At this point in his life, he was wheelchair bound and would likely never have another chance to hunt again. I had grown up with him teaching me how to hunt, but this time I was guiding him on his last hunt. He harvested a small deer which might as well been a trophy buck. I tied the deer to the front post of his wheelchair and pulled him and his deer backwards out of the woods nearly a ½ mile, all the time he was just reliving the moment and talking away. My Grandpa sadly passed a year later. Before he passed, I made a hunting video of that hunt for him to watch in his room as he was bed ridden and could barely move. His last days in bed were spent watching and remembering that final hunt.

In 2021 I guided a gentleman that was completely paralyzed from the neck down. He rode in a huge wheelchair that he controlled with his mouth. He had an assistant that never left his side. Using a crossbow mounted on a tripod, he also controlled by his mouth, he could aim and shoot. His ability to track a moving animal or even take a shot "quickly" was basically all but impossible. We watched several deer step feet and even inches away from where we could shoot them, but unless they were perfectly still over the bait pile I did not allow him to take an unethical shot.

In 2022 I guided a 100% blind Gentleman from Fargo ND. The experience will last with me forever. His inability to see did not limit his passion for the outdoors and he was very excited to be able to participate in a hunt like the Twist of Fate. Having to customize a crossbow for him and being his eyes was a difficult feat but having deer that came to a certain location and remained still enough for a shot made it possible for him to harvest a nice mature doe on his second day of hunting.

I can not speak for the rest of the state and the rest of the able body hunter populaton, but I can unequivocally tell you that without the ability to bait deer in ND our Twist of Fate hunt would not be possible. At this point in our almost 20+ year history there are hundreds of stories just like mine from the Twist of Fate. I look forward to that weekend hunt more than any other personal hunt. If any law prohibiting hunting deer over bait is ever passed, I would hope that there is an exception placed in the law that allows organizations like ours to either remain doing so or apply for a special permit. Thousands of memories and hundreds of lives have been touched by our organization and I fully understand these issues are complex but eliminating baiting could eliminate this hunt forever. I'm sure there are other organizations similar to ours, that would also be impacted by any limitations placed on baiting deer. I do not deer hunt personally in ND, so the Bill does not impact my freezer or my family, but I do know it will impact the success rate of this hunt if it is even able to be continued.

Thank you for your time

Semper Fi,

Jeremy D. Martinez
USMC Retired