

My name is Cole Scherbenske, I serve as Outdoor Ministry Director of the Carson Wentz Audience of One (AO1) Foundation and I am providing testimony in support of HB 1538.

In 2018, The AO1 Foundation launched its Outdoor Ministry Programs which consists of two parts, Camp Conquerors and Mountain Movers. Camp Conquerors is a free overnight summer camp for youth ages 11-18 who have experienced life altering and life threatening medical situations and diagnosis, Mountain Movers provides the same population of youth with once in a lifetime outdoor adventures such as hunting, fishing, hiking, and camping trips at no cost to them or their family. Both of these programs serve to aim to help our youth foster a genuine passion for the outdoors while bringing them closer to God through discipleship.

As a foundation we aim to provide our youth with incredible opportunities to get outdoors and experience creation through lenses they may not experience in their everyday lives. One of the opportunities we provided for our youth was our "Mountain Movers Fishing Derby," held in Devils Lake, ND in August of 2021.

Although we were successful in achieving our goal of "just taking kids fishing," that was far from the full story. We were faced with a couple of options; 1. Obtain a permit, jumping through several hoops with the scheduling, planning, reporting, and paying a conservation fee OR 2. Limit our number of participants, limit the age of our participants (to under 16), and meet the requirements to avoid obtaining a permit. We chose option 2 and were fortunate enough to accomplish our goals, but unfortunately it came at the cost.

In the beginning of our Mountain Movers Fishing Derby planning, we discussed options such as hosting a 2 day tournament, one day of free fishing tournament for our youth (just as we did in 2018), and a second day with a standard entry fee tournament with the proceeds benefiting the AO1 Foundation the Mountain Movers Fishing Derby. After learning the regulations for fishing tournaments in North Dakota, we decided to "hang up" the idea as the majority of the proceeds wouldn't be benefitting our youth.

Unfortunately, after our inaugural Mountain Movers Fishing Derby, we opted to not continue the event as we could no longer meet the requirements to avoid obtaining a permit (without minimizing the number of youth involved), as well as the fact that potential ideas of fundraising were simply not plausible with the current fishing tournament rules and regulations.