

Governor Shapiro Signs Historic Bipartisan Legislation to Repeal Pennsylvania's Ban on Sunday Hunting, Giving Hunters More Freedom, Supporting Rural Economies, and Honoring Pennsylvania Traditions

Governor Shapiro signed [HB 1431](#) into law, officially repealing Pennsylvania's longstanding ban on Sunday hunting — one of the last remaining "blue laws" dating back to the 17th century.

The new law expands freedom for hunters, empowers the Pennsylvania Game Commission to set hunting seasons that include Sundays, and strengthens conservation efforts while growing rural economies across the Commonwealth.

July 09, 2025

West Hanover Township, PA – Today, **Governor Josh Shapiro** signed [House Bill 1431](#) into law, repealing Pennsylvania's longstanding ban on Sunday hunting. This new bipartisan law delivers real freedom for Pennsylvania's 850,000 licensed hunters, empowers the **Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC)** to expand Sunday hunting opportunities, and strengthens wildlife conservation efforts while growing rural economies across the Commonwealth.

Speaking at the Blue Ridge Sportsman Club in Dauphin County, **Governor Shapiro** was joined by **Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding**, **Pennsylvania Game Commission Executive Director Steve Smith**, **Representative Mandy Steele**, legislators, hunters, and outdoor advocates to mark this historic change.

"This new law is about real freedom: the freedom to hunt, the freedom for families to pass down traditions to the next generation, and the freedom for the Pennsylvania Game Commission — the experts who know our hunters and our wildlife best — to set hunting seasons that work for today's Pennsylvania," said **Governor Shapiro**. "By repealing this outdated ban on Sunday hunting, Pennsylvanians can spend more time outdoors, with more chances to share traditions and a stronger future for conservation. I'm proud we came together to bring Pennsylvania's hunting laws into the 21st century and honor the traditions that make our Commonwealth special."

Since 2020, Pennsylvania hunters have been able to hunt on three designated Sundays each year — and during that time, the Commonwealth has maintained steady hunting license sales even as many other states have seen declines. The PGC has seen that even limited Sunday hunting opportunities have helped keep hunters and sportsmen engaged — and expects that broader access under the new law will further strengthen Pennsylvania's hunting heritage for current and future generations.

The new law gives PGC full authority to decide which hunting seasons can include Sundays — guided by biological data and hunter feedback. Until now, Sunday hunting was strictly limited to one each during archery and rifle deer seasons and a third Sunday chosen by the PGC.

"For years, we heard from hunters across Pennsylvania frustrated by the Sunday hunting ban — from young hunters with school obligations to folks working two jobs and parents balancing family time on weekends, all wanting more time outdoors," said **Pennsylvania Game Commission Executive Director Steve Smith**. "As a parent myself, I know what it's like to spend every fall Saturday on the sidelines, wondering when you'll get to hunt — let alone share that tradition with your kids. Today, we're changing that. By making hunting more accessible for everyone, this new law isn't just a win for hunters — it's a win for conservation. It helps us better manage wildlife now and ensures we pass down this tradition to the next generation. It's a great day for Pennsylvania."

Strengthening Rural Communities and Honoring Tradition

Hunting contributes over \$1.6 billion annually to Pennsylvania's economy, supports more than 15,000 jobs, and generates millions in state and local tax revenue. Expanding Sunday hunting is expected to draw more hunters from within and outside the Commonwealth — increasing spending at local businesses and helping sustain wildlife conservation efforts funded by license sales. With around 850,000 licensed hunters, Pennsylvania ranks second in the nation, just behind Texas.

At the same time, the law also strengthens protections against trespassing on private property, ensuring the rights of landowners are respected as Sunday hunting expands.

"The passage of Sunday hunting is a meaningful step forward for Pennsylvania's farmers, too," said **Secretary Redding**. "Crop damage from overabundant wildlife continues to take a real toll on farms across the Commonwealth. Giving hunters more days in the field helps protect livelihoods, especially in areas hardest hit."

"Here in Pennsylvania, we still believe in coming together to get stuff done — and that's exactly what happened with Sunday hunting," said **Dan Sneath, Director of Legislative Affairs for Hunter Nation**. "We rolled up our sleeves, went to work, and found common ground between the agricultural community and hunters. Farmers were struggling with crop damage, and hunters were ready to help. By working together, we reached solutions that benefit everyone."

Bipartisan Support to Get Stuff Done in Pennsylvania

House Bill 1431, sponsored by Representative Mandy Steele, passed the House in a 142-61 vote and the Senate by a 34-16 vote — showing broad bipartisan support. Identical legislation (SB67) was also introduced by Senator Dan Laughlin.

"Repealing the archaic ban on Sunday hunting is a historic win for Pennsylvania's forests and for generations of hunters to come," said **Representative Mandy Steele**. "I am honored to have led on this issue in the House. This new law creates more opportunities for hunters to

participate in one of America's oldest traditions and be on the front line of conservation here in the Keystone State. Governor Shapiro has long understood the value of hunting and conservation, and I admire his commitment to getting this bill signed fast — he truly gets stuff done."

"For years, I've worked alongside sportsmen, farmers, and colleagues on both sides of the aisle to finally bring Pennsylvania in line with the vast majority of other states," said **Senator Dan Laughlin**. With the signing of HB 1431, we're showing that common-sense reform is possible when we focus on shared values. I'm proud of this bill, proud of the process, proud of the persistence, and proud of what it means for Pennsylvania."

The law takes effect on September 7, 2025. After that, the PGC will set new season dates and bag limits, paving the way for expanded Sunday hunting opportunities.

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