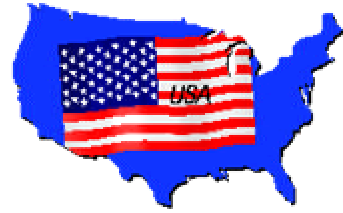


## The Coalition for Disabled Hunter Rights



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### **Press Release: March 21, 2003**

A new organization, *The Coalition for Disabled Hunter Rights*, has been formed to coordinate ongoing efforts of disabled and able-bodied individuals working to achieve equal hunting opportunities for all hunters, in all states, during all hunting seasons. The Coalition's rapidly growing membership is proof that reform is needed – reform of regulations, reform of allowable equipment, and reform of antiquated opinions regarding disabled hunters.

Today, many states fail to recognize that there are unique requirements created by the diversity of disabilities, resulting in unreasonably complicated and restrictive regulations for disabled hunters. This lack of awareness forces disabled hunters to adopt equipment that does not meet their needs, or to forego hunting in some states. The Coalition believes that decisions about which devices will most safely and efficiently accommodate a disabled hunter's individual needs should be made by that individual and his or her licensed physician.

The Coalition's primary goal is to reform disabled archery regulations nationwide to ensure that disabled archers are afforded the opportunity to choose a weapon that best accommodates their needs – this will include the legalization of both crossbows and modified compound bows. Myths regarding crossbow speed, power, and range are often cited in influencing regulations prohibiting their use during archery seasons. In reality, however, the crossbow offers disabled hunters no significant advantages over able-bodied hunters. For many disabled hunters, the crossbow offers the safest, most effective means to hunt as an equal. This weapon accommodates a variety of disabilities while simultaneously maintaining a reasonable essence of the bowhunting heritage. The Coalition believes that opponents of crossbows are misinformed in their belief that disabled crossbowers will “ruin the bow season”.

In addition, the Coalition believes it is imperative that all disabled archer regulations must become flexible enough to allow for equipment adaptation that accommodates individual needs. Should a standard crossbow not accommodate an individual disability, that hunter should be afforded the opportunity to modify his or her archery equipment as needed – this includes the use of Draw-Loc devices, mouth tabs, body braces, and any other reasonable modification.

The Coalition's secondary goal is to standardize crossbow regulations across all states, as well as bring reform in states where current regulations are unfairly restrictive for disabled hunters – this includes eliminating strictly defined, “no exception” permit eligibility requirements. There are many states where crossbows and modified bows are already legalized, but where permit eligibility requirements are so strict that many disabled are turned away or deterred from applying.

Promoting uniformity among hunters will be an ongoing goal. All hunters, whether able-bodied or disabled, are significantly outnumbered by anti-hunters. The Coalition feels strongly that its education efforts regarding disabled hunters and their unique needs will be valuable in promoting greater understanding, awareness, and unity among hunters -- because only unity will save the hunting heritage.

The Coalition's first effort will be in West Virginia, where all available remedies within the Americans with Disabilities Act will be used as necessary.

For more information, please visit our web site at [www.disabledrights.org](http://www.disabledrights.org).

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