88R629 BEE-D

By:  Leach H.B. No. 1740

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to waivers for entrance fees to state parks for resident first responders, military service members, and veterans.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1.  Section 13.015, Parks and Wildlife Code, is amended by amending Subsection (a-2) and adding Subsections (a-3) and (a-4) to read as follows:

(a-2)  The department shall waive the park entrance fee for a resident of this state who is a first responder. In this subsection, "first responder" means a person who is:

(1)  a firefighter certified by the Texas Commission on Fire Protection or by the State Firefighters' and Fire Marshals' Association of Texas;

(2)  an individual certified as emergency medical services personnel by the Department of State Health Services;

(3)  a municipal police officer;

(4)  a sheriff, deputy sheriff, or reserve deputy sheriff; or

(5)  a constable, deputy constable, or reserve deputy constable.

(a-3)  The department shall waive the park entrance fee for an active duty member or veteran of the armed services of the United States, the Texas Army National Guard, the Texas Air National Guard, or the Texas State Guard.

(a-4)  The department may promote visits and enhance revenue at parks, including amounts necessary for salaries, advertising, consumable supplies and materials, promotional products, fees, and related expenses.

SECTION 2.  Sections 13.018(a), (c), and (e), Parks and Wildlife Code, are amended to read as follows:

(a)  The following people may apply to the department for a state parklands passport:

(1)  a resident of this state who is 65 years old or over who has resided in the state for six consecutive months preceding the date of application for a parklands passport[~~, a member of the United States armed forces on active duty who is 65 years old or over,~~] or any other individual in a category that the commission by rule designates as a resident of this state who is 65 years old or over; and

(2)  [~~a veteran of the armed services of the United States who, as a result of military service, has a service-connected disability, as defined by the Veterans' Administration, consisting of the loss of the use of a lower extremity or of a 60 percent disability rating and who is receiving compensation from the United States because of the disability; and~~

[~~(3)~~]  an individual who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of the individual.

(c)  The holder of a state parklands passport issued on or before August 31, 1995, or a person whose birth date is before September 1, 1930, [~~or a veteran described by Subsection (a)(2)~~] is entitled to enter any state park without payment of an entrance or admission fee. When a fee is charged by the department for entrance of a vehicle into a state park, the vehicle of the holder of a state parklands passport is exempt from the fee when the holder is present.

(e)  The commission by rule shall establish eligibility requirements and privileges available to the holder of a state parklands passport described by Subsection (a)(2) [~~(a)(3)~~].

SECTION 3.  This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.