

By: Cortez

H.B. No. 293

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to waivers for state park entrance fees and hunting and fishing license fees for certain resident first responders.

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 Subsection (a-3) to read as follows:

(a-2) The department shall waive the park entrance fee for a resident as defined by Section 42.001 who is a first responder as defined by Section 42.012 and who:

(1) has completed at least 20 years of continuous service as a first responder; or

(2) has a disability connected to service as a first responder consisting of the loss of the use of a lower extremity or of a disability rating of 50 percent or more.

(a-3) 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. Section 42.012, Parks and Wildlife Code, is amended by amending Subsection (c) and adding Subsection (d) to read as follows:

(c) The commission shall waive the fee or license requirement for a resident who is a first responder who:

1 (1) has completed at least 20 years of continuous
2 service as a first responder; or

3 (2) has a disability connected to service as a first
4 responder consisting of the loss of the use of a lower extremity or
5 of a disability rating of 50 percent or more.

6 (d) In this section:

7 (1) "First responder" means:

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

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

13 (C) a municipal police officer;

14 (D) a sheriff, deputy sheriff, or reserve deputy
15 sheriff; or

16 (E) a constable, deputy constable, or reserve
17 deputy constable.

18 (2) "Qualified veteran with a disability" means a
19 veteran with a service connected disability, as defined by the
20 United States Department of Veterans Affairs, consisting of the
21 loss of the use of a lower extremity or of a disability rating of 50
22 percent or more and who is receiving compensation from the United
23 States for the disability.

24 SECTION 3. Section 46.004(c), Parks and Wildlife Code, is
25 amended to read as follows:

26 (c) The commission shall waive the fee for:

27 (1) a qualified veteran with a disability as defined

1 by Section [42.012](#);

2 (2) ~~[and for]~~ a resident on active duty as a member of
3 the United States military forces, the Texas Army National Guard,
4 the Texas Air National Guard, or the Texas State Guard; and

5 (3) a resident who is a first responder as defined by
6 Section [42.012](#) and who:

7 (A) has completed at least 20 years of continuous
8 service as a first responder; or

9 (B) has a disability connected to service as a
10 first responder consisting of the loss of the use of a lower
11 extremity or of a disability rating of 50 percent or more.

12 SECTION 4. Section [50.002](#), Parks and Wildlife Code, is
13 amended by adding Subsection (c) to read as follows:

14 (c) The commission shall waive the fee for an annual
15 combination resident hunting and fishing license for a resident
16 who is a first responder as defined by Section [42.012](#) and who:

17 (1) has completed at least 20 years of continuous
18 service as a first responder; or

19 (2) has a disability connected to service as a first
20 responder consisting of the loss of the use of a lower extremity or
21 of a disability rating of 50 percent or more.

22 SECTION 5. This Act takes effect September 1, 2023.