

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.

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

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

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

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

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

22 [~~3~~] an individual who has a physical or mental
23 impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life
24 activities of the individual.

25 (c) The holder of a state parklands passport issued on or
26 before August 31, 1995, or a person whose birth date is before
27 September 1, 1930, [~~or a veteran described by Subsection (a)(2)] is~~

1 entitled to enter any state park without payment of an entrance or
2 admission fee. When a fee is charged by the department for entrance
3 of a vehicle into a state park, the vehicle of the holder of a state
4 parklands passport is exempt from the fee when the holder is
5 present.

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

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