By: Cortez H.B. No. 1175

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 Subsections (a-3) and (a-4) to read as follows:

(a-2) The department shall waive the park entrance fee for a resident who is a first responder 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) For purposes of Subsection (a-2):

(1) "First responder" has the meaning assigned by Section 42.012.

(2) "Resident" means:

(A) an individual who has resided continuously in this state for more than six months immediately before visiting the state park; and

(B) an individual described by Section 42.001(1)(B), (C), (D), (E), or (F).

(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. 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 for a resident who is a first responder 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.

(d) In this section:

(1) "First responder" means:

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

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

(C) a municipal police officer;

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

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

(2) "Qualified veteran with a disability" means a veteran with a service connected disability, as defined by the

United States Department of Veterans Affairs, consisting of the loss of the use of a lower extremity or of a disability rating of 50 percent or more and who is receiving compensation from the United States for the disability.

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

(c) The commission shall waive the fee for:

(1) a qualified veteran with a disability as defined by Section 42.012;

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

(3) a resident who is a first responder as defined by Section 42.012 and who:

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

(B) 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.

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

(c) The commission shall waive the fee for an annual combination resident hunting and fishing license for a resident 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.

SECTION 5. (a) The changes in law made by this Act to Chapters 42, 46, and 50, Parks and Wildlife Code, apply only to a fee charged for a hunting, fishing, or combination hunting and fishing license issued on or after the effective date of this Act.

(b) A hunting, fishing, or combination hunting and fishing license issued before the effective date of this Act is governed by the law in effect when the license was issued, and the former law is continued in effect for that purpose. The Parks and Wildlife Department is not required to issue a refund for any license issued before the effective date of this Act.

SECTION 6. This Act takes effect September 1, 2027.