

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1247

As Reported by House Committee On:
Community Development, Housing & Tribal Affairs

Title: An act relating to eligibility for lifetime veteran's disability passes.

Brief Description: Concerning eligibility for lifetime veteran's disability passes.

Sponsors: Representatives McCabe, Kilduff, Muri, Caldier, Wylie, Dent, Tarleton, Haler, Stanford, Appleton, McBride and Young.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Community Development, Housing & Tribal Affairs: 2/2/17, 2/8/17 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Makes Oregon resident disabled veterans eligible for the Lifetime Veteran Disability Pass if Oregon provides reciprocal cost-free state park access to Washington disabled veterans.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, HOUSING & TRIBAL AFFAIRS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Ryu, Chair; Macri, Vice Chair; McCabe, Ranking Minority Member; Barkis, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Jenkin, Reeves and Sawyer.

Staff: Sean Flynn (786-7124).

Background:

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission (State Parks) charges admission and camping fees for state park access. Under the park passes program, the State Parks issues different park passes for specially designated groups that qualify for discounts or exemptions from park fees. The Lifetime Veteran Disability Pass entitles any state resident who is a veteran with at least a 30 percent service-related disability to free admission to any state park and waiver of any campsite fees.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

Until June 30, 2019, an Oregon resident who is a veteran with at least a 30 percent service-related disability is eligible for the Lifetime Veteran Disability Pass, provided that Oregon gives reciprocal cost-free state park access to Washington resident disabled veterans.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The expansion of the Lifetime Veteran Disability Pass to eligible Oregon veterans expires June 30, 2019.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Substitute Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Washington shares many resources and services with Oregon. Expanding the Lifetime Disabled Veterans Parks Pass to our neighbors encourages more people to visit the state which will increase the tourism economy. The expansion is also an expression of thanks to the sacrifices made by our veterans. The intent of the bill is good and veterans are definitely deserving of this benefit, however, the State Parks relies on the Discover Pass and camping fees as its main source of income. If such an exemption from the fee program is made, there should be a clear funding mechanism established to replace the lost revenue that will occur. The State Parks is studying the whole Discover Pass program and addressing equity, consistency, and efficiency in a holistic way so that all policy matters are considered together.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative McCabe, prime sponsor; Larry Jose and James Sype.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.