

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESSB 5010

As Reported by House Committee On:

Ecology & Parks
Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government & Audit Review

Title: An act relating to creating a state park foster home pass.

Brief Description: Creating a state park foster home pass.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Honeyford and Hewitt).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Ecology & Parks: 2/22/08, 2/26/08 [DP];

Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government & Audit Review: 2/28/08, 2/29/08 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill (As Amended by House Committee)

- Creates a state park foster home pass that entitles the holder and the members of his or her camping unit to free admission and camping at state parks, as well as free access and usage of park campsites at some non-operated, non-state-owned parks.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ECOLOGY & PARKS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Uptegrove, Chair; Rolfes, Vice Chair; Sump, Ranking Minority Member; Dickerson, Dunshee, Eickmeyer, Kristiansen, O'Brien and Pearson.

Staff: Jaclyn Ford (786-7339).

Background:

Washington statute provides state park fee discounts and exemptions to several categories of residents. These classes include: (1) senior citizens with a limited income; (2) disabled

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persons; and (3) disabled veterans. Generally, the exemptions provide free park admission and a 50 percent reduction in camping fees. The disabled veteran exemption, however, provides free park admission, an exemption from camping reservation fees, and free camping.

Summary of Bill:

Washington residents qualify for a foster home pass when they either provide licensed foster care to a child under a foster family home license or are related to that child. When accompanied by a foster child, the pass entitles the holder and the members of his or her camping unit to free admission and camping at state parks.

Applicants must request a pass from the State Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission). The Commission must verify with the Department of Social and Health Services that the applicant is eligible for a pass. The Commission must issue passes for no less than one year.

The Commission must also negotiate to allow holders of the foster home park pass free access and use of park campsites at Central Ferry, Chief Timothy, Crow Butte, and Lyons Ferry in Asotin County. The Commission will request reimbursement on a biennial basis.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This is a way to say thank you to foster parents and their children.

(Opposed) This would be a fiscal impact to State Parks. This bill would be a double hit to the State Parks. First, camping would be free to these park holders and their camping units and so State Parks would have to change their software and do rule making to accommodate this new pass. Second, State Parks would have to negotiate with the Army Corps of Engineers for access to the non-state-owned parks. State Parks would like to see a stable source of revenue before implementing this program.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Senator Honeyford, prime sponsor.

(Opposed) Fred Romero, Washington State Parks.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT & AUDIT REVIEW

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Linville, Chair; Ericks, Vice Chair; Skinner, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Blake, Chandler, Kretz, Lantz, Lias, Miloscia, Morris and Nelson.

Staff: Alicia Dunkin (786-7178).

Summary of Recommendation of Committee On Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government & Audit Review Compared to Recommendation of Committee On Ecology & Parks:

A null and void clause was added, making the bill null and void unless funded in the budget.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed. However, the bill is null and void unless funded in the budget.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) I have been a foster parent for 20 years and now have older teens. We spend most of August camping because it is something we can do together as part of our 24/7 job of being a foster parent. In Washington we don't identify kids as foster kids and we would like to keep it that way. We are not going to abuse this pass and would support re-wording it so that we don't need to identify our kids as being foster kids. These kids come from horrible situations and this is a little thing that we can do to help them out. We think by having this card that it will have a ripple effect in the private sector for passes to other activities as well. We would also agree to limit how long people can stay in parks.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Honeyford, prime sponsor; Steve Baxter, Foster Parents Association of Washington State; and Gary Malkasian.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.