

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: CS/HB 289 State Parks
SPONSOR(S): Environment & Natural Resources; Soto and others
TIED BILLS: **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:**

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR
1) <u>Committee on Conservation & State Lands</u>	<u>7 Y, 0 N</u>	<u>Palmer</u>	<u>Zeiler</u>
2) <u>Environment & Natural Resources Council</u>	<u>15 Y, 0 N, As CS</u>	<u>Palmer / Perkins</u>	<u>Dixon / Hamby</u>
3) <u>Policy & Budget Council</u>	<u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>
4) <u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>
5) <u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>	<u></u>

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

The bill provides that any person serving in any branch of the United States Armed Forces, veteran of the United States Armed Forces, or the spouses or minor children of such persons are not to be charged an admission fee to a state park on any federal or state holiday upon presentation valid identification card.

The Department of Environmental Protection estimates that this legislation would result in a loss of \$594,000 annually to the State Park Trust Fund.

The bill provides an effective date, July 1, 2008.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. HOUSE PRINCIPLES ANALYSIS:

The bill does not appear to implicate any of the House Principals.

B. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Present Situation

From its beginning in 1935, Florida's state park system has expanded to one of the largest and most heavily used systems in the country. Containing over 700,000 acres in 161 separate units, the state park system today represents a major commitment by the State of Florida to the preservation of its scenic resources. Florida state parks provide outstanding recreation opportunities for its citizens and visitors.¹ On average there are 17.4 million visitors per year to Florida's state parks.² Park entrance fees vary from \$3.00 per person to \$5.00 per vehicle.³ There is currently no statutory provision for free park admission for active duty members of the U.S. military.

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill creates s. 258.014(3) providing any person who is serving the United States Armed Forces, or the spouse or minor child of such persons, upon presentation of valid identification card, will not be charged an admission fee to a state park on Memorial Day. The bill also provides free admission to state parks on Veterans Day for all state park attendees in honor of U.S. military veterans. The bill encourages the Division of Parks and Recreation to hold special events and to take other actions appropriate to show appreciation to those who have served our country in the armed forces.

C. SECTION DIRECTORY:

Section 1: Creates s. 258.014, F.S., providing free admission to state parks on holidays for certain current and former U.S. military personnel and their families.

Section 2: Provides an effective date.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

2. The Department of Environmental Protection estimates that this legislation would result in a loss of \$594,000 annually to the State Park Trust Fund.

3. Expenditures:

None.

¹ DEP, 2008. Division of Recreation and Parks website: <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/mainpage/programs/parks.htm>.

² DEP, 2008. Jerri French, personal communication. E-mail,

³ DEP, 2008. Steve Dana, personal communication. Telephone.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

The bill provides free admission to state parks on federal and state holidays for active duty members and veterans of the U.S. military, and their spouses and minor children.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

Not applicable because this bill does not appear to require cities or counties to spend funds or take actions requiring the expenditure of funds, nor does it appear to reduce the authority that cities or counties have to raise revenues in the aggregate, nor does it appear to reduce the percentage of a state tax shared with cities or counties.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

No additional rulemaking authority is granted for implementing the provisions of this bill.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

D. STATEMENT OF THE SPONSOR

No statement submitted.

IV. AMENDMENTS/COUNCIL SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

The Environment & Natural Resources Council amended and passed HB 289 on April 2, 2008. CS/HB 289 differs from the original filed bill as follows: The original bill provides free admission to state parks on any federal or state holiday to any person who is serving in any branch of the United States Armed Forces, who is a veteran of the United States Armed Forces, or who is the spouse or minor child of such persons. The amended bill provides free admission to state parks on Memorial Day for all active U.S. military personnel, their spouses and minor children, and provides free admission to state parks on Veterans Day for all state park attendees in honor of U.S. military veterans. The amended bill also encourages the Division of Parks and Recreation to hold special events and to take other actions appropriate to show appreciation to those who have served our country in the armed forces.