

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Military Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security Committee

BILL: SB 236

INTRODUCER: Senator Hays

SUBJECT: State Parks

DATE: February 15, 2011

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Yune	Carter	MS	Favorable
2.			EP	
3.			BC	
4.				
5.				
6.				

I. Summary:

The bill allows parents of members of United States Armed Forces, National Guard, or reserve components who have fallen in combat to receive a lifetime family annual pass to Florida state parks at no charge.

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2011.

The bill substantially amends section 258.0145(3) of the Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

The Division of Recreation and Parks (division), which is part of the Department of Environmental Protection (department), oversees Florida's 160 state parks. The division has statutory authority¹ to charge reasonable fees for the use or operation of facilities and concessions in state parks.

The division offers a discount of one-half off of the daily admission fee to Florida National Guard active members, spouses and minor children. In addition, the division offers a Family Annual Entrance pass for \$120 and an Individual Annual Entrance pass for \$60. During the 2010 legislative session, s. 258.0145 F.S. was created to allow certain park fee discounts to people who provide written documentation which evidences their eligibility. There are three categories of eligibility and resulting discounts:²

¹ Section 258.014(1), F.S.

² <http://www.floridastateparks.org/default.cfm>

- Active duty members and honorably discharged veterans of the United States Armed Forces, National Guard, or reserve components thereof shall receive a 25% discount on annual entrance passes.
- Honorably discharged veterans who have service-connected disabilities shall receive lifetime family annual entrance passes at no charge.
- Surviving spouses of deceased members of the United States Armed Forces, National Guard, or reserve components thereof who have fallen in combat shall receive lifetime family annual entrance passes at no charge.

The monies collected from these fees are deposited into the State Park Trust Fund which is used for the administration, improvement and maintenance of the state parks and any acquisition of lands for state park purposes.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Section I: The bill amends s. 258.0145(3) F.S.:

- to expand the current fee waiver for surviving spouses to include parents of deceased members of the United States Armed Forces, National Guard, or any of their reserve components who have fallen in combat to receive lifetime family annual entrance passes at no charge as long as the proper documentation³, a DD 1300, is provided along with proof of parenthood.

Section II: Provides an effective date of July 1, 2011.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

³ A Department of Defense Form 1300 is a report of casualty form.

B. Private Sector Impact:

Parents of deceased members of the United States Armed Forces, National Guard, or reserve components will benefit from the waived entrance fees.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The department estimates that there will be a potential reduction in state revenue of up to \$30,000. However, the department states that the publicity and goodwill earned by the state is expected to offset the loss in revenues and result in increased visitation, thereby generating additional economic benefit for local communities and the state.

For the most part, there would be no fiscal impact on local governments. However, according to the department's website, some counties impose a surcharge in addition to the division's entrance fee. If the surcharges were waived, this may represent a potential reduction in revenue for the counties that impose the surcharge.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Additional Information:**A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:**

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.