

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 Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security

BILL: SB 378

INTRODUCER: Senator Abruzzo

SUBJECT: County and Municipal Parks

DATE: February 17, 2014

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Ryon	Ryon	MS	Pre-meeting
2.			CA	
3.			AP	

I. Summary:

SB 378 requires county and municipal departments of parks of recreation to provide varying levels of discounts on park entrance fees to the following individuals:

- An active duty member and an honorably discharged veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces, including National Guard and reserve components;
- An honorably discharged veteran with a service-connected disability;
- The surviving spouse or parents of a deceased member of the U.S. Armed Forces, including National Guard and reserve components, who has fallen in combat; and
- The surviving spouse or parent of a law enforcement officer or a firefighter who died in the line of duty.

II. Present Situation:

Veteran and Military Presence in Florida

The composition of current and former military personnel who reside in Florida consists of the following:

- 1.6 million veterans;¹
- 249,000 veterans with a service-connected disability;²
- 56,700 active duty personnel;³
- 35,600 reservists;⁴ and
- 12,000 Florida National Guard members.⁵

¹ Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs. Fast Facts. Available at: http://floridavets.org/?page_id=50

² Id.

³ Data provided by Haas Center for Business Research and Economic Development at the University of West Florida. On file with the Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security Committee.

⁴ Id.

⁵ Florida Department of Military Affairs. Available at: <http://www.floridaguard.army.mil/about-us>

State Park Entrance Fee Discounts

The Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP) within the Department of Environmental Protection oversees Florida’s 160 state parks. The DRP offers two types of annual entrance passes: the individual annual entrance pass for \$60 and the family annual entrance pass for \$120. The DRP currently provides park entrance fee discounts pursuant to the following:⁶

- Active duty members and honorably discharged veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces, National Guard, or reserve components receive a 25 percent discount on an annual entrance pass;
- Veterans with service-connected disabilities receive a free-for-life family annual entrance pass;
- Surviving spouses and parents of deceased members of the U.S. Armed Forces, National Guard, or reserve components who have fallen in combat receive a free-for-life family annual entrance pass; and
- Surviving spouses and parents of a law enforcement officers or firefighters who have died in the line of duty receive a free-for-life family annual entrance pass.

The table below reflects the application of the Florida state park entrance fee discounts provided in s. 258.0145, F.S., for fiscal year 2012-13.⁷

State Park Entrance Fee Discounts: FY 2012-13 (pursuant to s. 258.0145, F.S.)	
Individual Entrance Pass (25% discount: active duty servicemembers and veterans)	1,115
<u>Value of Discount</u>	\$16,725
Family Annual Entrance Pass (25% discount: active duty servicemembers and veterans)	3,200
<u>Value of Discount</u>	\$96,000
Lifetime Family Annual Entrance Pass (Full discount: disabled veterans; the spouse and parents of a fallen military servicemember, law enforcement officer, or firefighter)	14,381
<u>Value of Discount</u>	\$1,725,720
Total Passes FY 12-13	18,696
<u>Total Value of Discount</u>	<u>\$1,838,445</u>

Current law does not address entrance fee discounts for county and municipal parks for current and former military personnel and their families or the families of deceased first responders.

⁶ Section 258.0145, F.S.

⁷ Data provided by Department of Environmental Protection staff on 2-12-14. On file with the Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security Committee.

There are approximately 250 county and municipal parks and recreation agencies in Florida, each managing a number of park areas, which offer a variety of amenities.⁸

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill creates sections 125.028 and 166.0447, F.S., to require county departments of parks and recreation and municipal departments of parks and recreation, respectively, to provide entrance fee discounts to current and former military personnel and their families and the families of deceased first responders. The discounts provided in the bill are consistent with Florida state park entrance fee discounts prescribed in current law.

Specifically, the bill provides for the following entrance fee discounts for county and municipal parks:

- Active duty members and honorably discharged veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces, National Guard, or reserve components receive a 25 percent discount on an annual entrance pass;
- Veterans with service-connected disabilities receive a free-for-life family annual entrance pass;
- Surviving spouses and parents of deceased members of the U.S. Armed Forces, National Guard, or reserve components who have fallen in combat receive a free-for-life family annual entrance pass; and
- Surviving spouses and parents of a law enforcement officers or firefighters who have died in the line of duty receive a free-for-life family annual entrance pass.

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2014.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

This bill falls under subsection (b) of s. 18 of Article VII, Florida Constitution. Subsection (b) requires a two-thirds vote of the membership of each house in order to enact a general law reducing the authority that municipalities and counties had on February 1, 1989, to raise revenues in the aggregate. By adding a discount or waiver on park entrance fees for current and former military members and their families and the families of deceased first responders, the bill has the effect of reducing revenues generated from park entrance fees. The bill may be exempt under insignificant fiscal impact, but no estimate is available at this time.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

⁸ Data provided by the Florida Recreation and Parks Association, Inc., on 2-14-14. On file with the Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security Committee.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

Current and former military personnel, spouses and parents of deceased military servicemembers who have fallen in combat and also the spouses and parents of law enforcement officers or firefighters who have fallen in the line of duty will be eligible for reduced or waived entrance fees at county and municipal parks.

C. Government Sector Impact:

County and municipal departments of parks and recreation will experience a decrease in revenue generated from park entrance fees as a result of this bill.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill creates the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 125.028 and 166.0447.

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

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

None.

B. Amendments:

None.