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S.B. 223
136th General Assembly

# Bill Analysis

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**Version**: As Reported by Senate Armed Services, Veterans Affairs, and Public Safety

**Primary Sponsor**: Sen. Patton

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## SUMMARY


- Requires the ODNR Chief of the Division of Parks and Watercraft to establish a discount program for veterans and service members for state park services and rentals.


## DETAILED ANALYSIS

### Discount park program for veterans and service members

The bill requires the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' (ODNR) Chief of the Division of Parks and Watercraft to adopt rules establishing a discount program for all veterans[1] and service members[2] for all park services and rentals (but not a discount on merchandise purchases). The discount must be at least 25% off for those services and rentals.

To be eligible for this discount program, veterans and service members must present, in a manner determined by the Chief, one of the following valid forms of documentation:

1. An Ohio veteran ID card;
2. A U.S. Department of Defense authorized common access card;
3. A U.S. Department of Defense uniformed services identification and privilege card DD form 1173;
4. A U.S. Department of Defense issued next generation USID card;

[1] Under the bill, a veteran is any person who has completed service in the armed forces, including the national guard of any state, or a reserve component of the armed forces, who has been discharged under honorable conditions from the armed forces or who has been transferred to the reserve with evidence of satisfactory service.

[2] Under the bill, a service member is any person who is serving in the armed forces.

5. A military annual pass or military lifetime pass version of the national parks and federal recreational lands pass; or
6. A veteran health identification card issued by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.[3]

## Current discounts offered at Ohio state parks

Under current law, the Chief must adopt rules governing camping and state park facility usage, including rules establishing fees and charges for use of facilities in state parks and rules governing camps, camping, and fees for camps and camping.

As required under current law,[4] the Chief must establish a discount program for holders of a Golden Buckeye Card available to Ohioans aged 60 or older and Ohioans with a disability aged 18 or older.[5] That program offers a discount for all park services and rentals (but not a discount on merchandise purchases) as follows:

- 50% discount off camping fees, Sunday through Thursday.
- 10% discount off camping fees, Friday and Saturday.
- 10% discount off the total rate for all other overnight rentals and day use rentals, such as shelter houses.

ODNR also offers 10% off every night of the week for all overnight facilities for active and retired military. There is no Ohio residency requirement.

Finally, ODNR offers free camping at state parks for disabled veterans and former prisoners of war (POWs). To qualify, disabled veterans and POWs must meet the following qualifications:

- Must have been honorably discharged;
- Must have Ohio residency; and
- Must be a former POW or permanently and totally disabled veteran who is receiving compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs.[6]

[3] R.C. 1546.04.

[4] See R.C. 1546.04(B)(1).

[5] See Get A Golden Buckeye Card, which may be accessed by conducting a keyword "Golden Buckeye" search on the Ohio Department of Aging's website: https://aging.ohio.gov.

[6] See Discounts on Camping & Lodging, which may be accessed by conducting a keyword "Discounts on camping" search on the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' website: https://ohiodnr.gov.

# HISTORY

| Action | Date |
|---|---|
| Introduced | 06-17-25 |
| Reported, S. Armed Services, Veterans Affairs & Public Safety | 10-21-25 |

ANSB0223RS-136/sb