

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 21 (Senator Simonaire)
Education, Energy, and the Environment

Natural Resources - State Parks - Maryland Golden Age Pass

This bill establishes that a person age 62 or older who possesses a Maryland Golden Age Pass issued by the Maryland Park Service (MPS) (1) is entitled to free day-use entry to any State park that charges service fees and (2) may launch a boat at any State park without paying a boat launch fee. If a per-vehicle fee is in effect at a State park, the free day-use entry applies to everyone in the vehicle with the holder of a Maryland Golden Age Pass. The bill also expands the existing authorization for a holder of a Maryland Golden Age Pass to camp overnight in any State park at one-half of the established fee Monday through Thursday (excluding holidays), by making the authorization applicable *Sunday* through Thursday.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The bill codifies – in statute – a combination of current regulations and current practice.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Pursuant to Department of Natural Resources (DNR) regulations, the State park system is administered under the jurisdiction of MPS to preserve and protect the best of Maryland's natural and historic places for the enjoyment and appreciation of its citizens. The parks are managed to provide public benefits, including (1) natural resource conservation; (2) cultural and historic preservation; (3) watershed protection; (4) education

and interpretation; and (5) nature-based outdoor recreation, including trails, picnicking, boating, camping, cabins, hunting, fishing, and swimming. DNR regulations establish that an individual may not make use of, or gain admittance to, a facility or activity in a State park for which there is a fee, unless the fee is paid; however, an individual age 62 or older must be admitted to day-use areas free of an admittance charge, if the individual submits proof of age and registers with MPS. In addition, under statute, a person age 62 or older who possesses a Maryland Golden Age Pass, issued by MPS, may camp overnight in any State park at one-half of the established fee Monday through Thursday, excluding holidays.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has been introduced within the last three years. See SB 312 of 2025.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Natural Resources; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 21, 2026
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