

**Written Testimony to the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee  
SB 515 - State Emergency Medical Services Board – Park Services Associates –  
Certification as Emergency Medical Responders  
February 15, 2022**

**SUPPORT**

Chair Pinsky and members of the committee. On behalf of the Maryland Professional Employees Council, AFT- Local 6197, representing over 5,000 professional employees for the state of Maryland, we ask for a favorable report on SB 515-State Emergency Medical Services Board – Park Services Associates –Certification as Emergency Medical Responders.

The Department of Natural Resources currently employs 78 Park Service Associates (PSAs), commonly known as Park Rangers. They have the necessary knowledge and skills to provide immediate lifesaving interventions while awaiting additional EMS resources.

As certified Red Cross Emergency Responders, PSAs provide a range of emergency services such as CPR, first aid, emergency medical search and rescue, and wildland fire response. They are the frontline workers in Maryland State Parks who are usually first on the scene when incidents occur. They are dedicated, trained professionals who put themselves at risk to serve Maryland but are denied the proper recognition and benefits they deserve.

Two years into the pandemic, we are reminded of the importance of better using our resources. This bill immediately adds trained EMRs to Maryland’s medical resources and provides PSAs the recognition and benefits they deserve. For these reasons, we urge you to move favorably on SB 515.

Jerry Smith  
President