

Testimonial

Emergency Park Ranger Bill-HB1438

Greetings Legislators:

We Park Service Associates (PSAs) Commonly known as Park Rangers stand united and in solidarity with fellow MPEC (Maryland Professional Employees Council Local 6197) members and supporters, as we share our accounts of public service to those in the state of Maryland.

As PSAs, we provide various emergency services including but not limited to Emergency Medical search and rescue and wildland fire response. We believe we should be recognized in the same class as First Responders as we are truly the frontline workers and responders to an incident. There have been several incidents that PSAs have been first on scene and saved lives due to our level of training and professionalism. We have responded to incidents including but not limited to scrapes, cuts, puncture wounds, broken bones, gunshot wounds (hunting accidents), substance overdose, aquatic injuries and weather related injuries.

I have listed two examples of Rangers being the first to respond. Rangers at Sandy point were the first to respond to a drowning victim and immediately started Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR). Rangers at Hart Miller Island State Park recognized a person in the water drowning and rendered aide from a Park Service Vessel. Rangers at South Mountain Recreation Area responded to person under the influence which rapidly turned into a Respiratory arrest event. With the quick actions, training and professionalism the outcomes of these events were positive.

We deserve to have our credentials aligned with the rest of Maryland's First Responders as we are providing the same services with the same level of training as Red Cross certified Emergency Medical Responders. Our affiliation was taken away 5 years ago due to the merging of Law Enforcement Rangers into Natural Resource Police. If we are called to duty during an emergency like the Covid-19 pandemic, the Rangers will receive the same financial benefit and health care coverage as we our putting our lives on the line to benefit the public. The governor declared a state of emergency and that the state parks were the safest place to go to recreate.

As a Park Ranger, Ranger presence allows us to constantly scan and interact with the public. We are constantly completing wellness observations of our visitors and focusing on incident prevention through educating visitors about weather conditions. We help prevent incidents by giving visitors information to better prepare themselves for their visit (sunblock, staying hydrated, wearing proper shoes or boots for a hike etc.)

Being credentialed as other First Responders in MD would greatly increase the benefit to the state as it would have approximately 200 Emergency Medical Responders to assist with emergency situations and answer the call for duty when called upon to serve the people in the state of Maryland.

We are passionate about our work and we give our all to the public in keeping the parks safe. Help give the Maryland Park Service Rangers the recognition they deserve as they continue to provide professional emergency services to the visitors and residents in the state of Maryland. Please give HB 1438 a favorable vote.