

**Testimony for HB1438**  
**Certification of Park Services Associates as Emergency Medical Responders**

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Esteemed Legislators:

My name is Nathan Cmiel, and I work for the Maryland Park Service as a non-law enforcement Park Ranger (formally classified as a Park Services Associate). During my career as a Park Services Associate, I have responded to a wide variety of emergencies: campers with broken bones, guests who were harmed by wildlife, burn victims, children with severe bleeding from multiple lacerations, lost and missing persons, and victims of sudden illnesses. While serving, I have provided cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), used an automated external defibrillator (AED), transported patients to the hospital, and have coordinated with local Emergency Medical Services and Maryland State Police to prepare and clear helicopter landing zones in Maryland State Parks to provide for medical evacuation on two separate occasions for patients with severe spinal injuries. Furthermore, I have worked alongside of Natural Resources Police and Maryland State Troopers, and in the line of duty I have directly provided emergency care for a wounded member of Maryland's Finest.

My story is not unique. There are hundreds of Maryland Park Services Associates employed by the Department of Natural Resources, and each one has a story to tell about their experience responding to the scene of an emergency. Each Park Services Associate is required to certify as an Emergency Medical Responder through the American Red Cross, and each Park Services Associate is required to take courses on the National Incident Management System and the Incident Command System through the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The Global COVID-19 Pandemic has produced response situations which have highlighted the current shortcomings of the Maryland Park Service's emergency response framework, which are directly related to the failure to recognize Park Services Associates formally as Emergency Medical Responders. In the State Parks which I have worked, I have been required to carry and monitor supplemental 911 dispatch-scanners or radio devices which are "on loan" from local volunteer fire stations. To my knowledge, these are generally borrowed on behalf of the respective state parks via informal memorandums of understanding by Park Services Associates who volunteer their spare time as Emergency Medical Technicians. If it were not for these supplementary 911 dispatch-scanning devices, there would be a significant delay in the ability of Park Services Associates to provide critical care to victims suffering from an emergency in a State Park. Again, these potential delays in service became especially evident to responding Park Services Associates during the near-complete exhaustion of emergency medical resources at the county level during the height of the Global COVID-19 Pandemic, but the delays were countermanded due to the efforts of Park Services Associates who took the extra time and effort to ensure they had the means to properly respond to emergencies in their respective State Parks.

Ratifying this bill would immediately and formally add at least 200 trained and experienced frontline Emergency Medical Responders to Maryland's pool of resources for first response and mutual aid.

Ratifying this bill would give the Maryland Park Services Associates the infrastructure and resources they need to properly provide prompt aid and emergency medical services.

Ratifying this bill is the best way to better to bolster our emergency response framework to best suit the needs of the constituents and visitors of Maryland, whom you and I both share a passion for serving.

Members of the legislature, thank you for receiving and reviewing my testimony.  
In service and in solidarity,

Ranger Nathan Cmiel