

state parks final.pdf

Uploaded by: Heather Brown

Position: FAV

Behind the Line, Inc.
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Our police officers, fire fighters, EMTs, Medics, and Dispatchers face situations daily that can have negative implications on their mind and body. Our bodies are designed to protect us from danger and adapt to survive. For instance, when faced with a critical incident, the body will automatically increase the production of adrenaline, cortisol, and oxytocin. It can take up to 48 hours for our bodies to fully detox from the increase of these hormones. Unfortunately for our first responders, they are unable to have periods of time that allow them to detox from the hormones and instead they continue to build. According to the Mayo Clinic high doses of cortisol becomes dangerous and increases a person's risk for heart disease, weight gain, sleep disorders, anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress. We also know that staying at high states of stress decrease a person's cognitive abilities.

Nature has been proven as means to help people heal and relax from stress and trauma. It has been reported by Harvard Medical School that spending a minimum of 20-30 minutes in nature was one of the strongest interventions to lower cortisol levels. Helping our first responders increase access to the State National Parks can increase their ability to heal from the daily stress and traumas. For our first responders' wellness, we can continue to increase their resilience, strengthen their relationships, and increase their work productivity by providing them access to nature within our own State.

SB 823.pdf

Uploaded by: Marvin Holmes

Position: FAV

MARVIN E. HOLMES, JR.
Legislative District 23B
Prince George's County

Environment and
Transportation Committee

Chair
Housing and Real Property
Subcommittee

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The Maryland House of Delegates

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Maryland Fire-EMS Coalition

February 28, 2023

Maryland Fire-EMS Coalition

The Fire/EMS Coalition unites Republicans and Democrats in support of fire/emergency services legislation that benefit all first responders. Becoming a member does not require taking positions on legislation; rather Coalition members are asked to pledge support in a way that best benefits fire/emergency services in their respective Legislative Districts.

Delegate Marvin E. Holmes, Chair

Support for SB 823 - Natural Resources - Annual State Park Pass - Discounts for Law Enforcement Officers and First Responders

Sponsored by: Senators Carozza, Feldman, Hester, Salling, Corderman, Zucker, Gallion, and Mautz

In the Senate - Hearing 3/8 at 1:00 p.m. Education, Energy, and the Environment

The Maryland Fire-EMS Coalition Supports SB 823 - Natural Resources - Annual State Park Pass - Discounts for Law Enforcement Officers and First Responders

We urge the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to give SB 823 a Favorable Report.

THE MARYLAND FIRE-EMS COALITION PARTICIPANTS REPRESENT THE MARYLAND SENATE AND THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES. VOTING MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS ARE: MARYLAND FIRE CHIEF'S ASSOCIATION (MFC), MARYLAND STATE FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION (MSFA), PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS OF MARYLAND (PFFMD), MARYLAND FIRE RESCUE INSTITUTE(MFRA), MARYLAND INSTITUTE FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES SYSTEMS (MIEMMS), STATE FIRE MARSHAL(OSFM), AND MARYLAND METRO FIRE CHIEF'S COUNCIL (MMFCC)

SB 823 written testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Melissa Bragg

Position: FAV

To Chairman Feldman and distinguished members of the Education, Energy and Environment committee: My name is Melissa Bragg, and I serve as the President of the Worcester County Professional Firefighter's Association. I also serve as the 2nd Vice President for the Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland. I am submitting testimony in support of SB 823, which would provide a discount on annual state park passes for law enforcement officers and first responders.

Simply put, law enforcement officers and firefighters are some of the most stressful professions. PTSD and related mental health issues are a very real part of our jobs, considering the amount of trauma and negativity we see daily, compounded by years and years of working.

We are fortunate to have so many beautiful state parks in Maryland. Our state parks can provide much needed rest and relaxation for our first responders. For some, this might provide the necessary respite they require to help heal and have good mental and physical health. The National Institute for Mental Health even suggests those suffering from PTSD, "should seek out comforting places," as a coping mechanism.

Our law enforcement officers and firefighters put their lives on the line daily to keep our communities safe and protected. I feel that a discount on state park passes is a small token to help them stay healthy and focused for themselves, their families and their jobs. I urge a favorable report on SB 823. Thank you for your consideration.

SB 823 testimony Roger.pdf

Uploaded by: Robert Phillips

Position: FAV

MARYLAND STATE FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Representing the Volunteer Fire, Rescue and Emergency Medical Services Personnel



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SB 823: Natural Resources – Annual State Park Pass – Discounts for Law Enforcement Officers and First Responders

My name is Roger A. Steger, Sr. and I am the Executive Committee Representative for the Maryland State Firemen's Association (MSFA). I represent Worcester, Wicomico and Somerset County Volunteer FireFighters Associations

I wish to present testimony in favor of Senate Bill 823: Natural Resources – Annual State Park Pass – Discounts for Law Enforcement Officers and First Responders

The Worcester, Wicomico and Somerset County Volunteer FireFighters Associations are in favor of and support this bill. The time that is required for our volunteer first responders for their training and responsibilities are considerable. The first few years that a person is a first responder includes several hundred hours of education. There are many family functions from the everyday life that we ask our volunteer responders to be away from their family activities. This bill is a way to give back allowing "family time" to be quality time together and not cost as much so they can afford to enjoy our State Parks to make family memories.

I thank the committee for their time and attention to this important bill and ask that you vote favorable on Senate Bill 823.

I would welcome you to contact me with any inquiries you might have. My contact information is listed above.

Thank you,

SB823 testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Robert Phillips

Position: FAV

MARYLAND STATE FIREFIGHTER'S ASSOCIATION

REPRESENTING THE VOLUNTEER FIRE, RESCUE, AND EMS PERSONNEL OF MARYLAND.



Robert P. Phillips

Chair

Legislative Committee

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SB 823: Natural Resources – Annual State Park Pass – Discounts for Law Enforcement Officers and First Responders

My name is Robert Phillips and I am the Legislative Committee Chair for the Maryland State FireFighters Association (MSFA)

I wish to present testimony in favor of Senate Bill 823: Natural Resources – Annual State Park Pass – Discounts for Law Enforcement Officers and First Responders

The MSFA is in favor of and support this bill. The time that is required for a volunteer first responder for their training and responsibilities is considerable. The first few years that a person is a first responder includes several hundred hours of education. There are many family functions from the everyday to the special that we ask for a responder to be away from their family. This bill is a way to give back allowing "family time" to be quality time and not cost as much so they can afford to enjoy it more often.

I thank the committee for their time and attention to this important bill and ask that you vote favorable on Senate Bill 823

I will now be glad to answer any questions, or my contact information is listed above and welcome any further inquiries you might have.

SB 823 Testimony - Carozza_FINAL.pdf

Uploaded by: Senator Mary Beth Carozza

Position: FAV

MARY BETH CAROZZA
Legislative District 38
Somerset, Wicomico,
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Education, Energy, and
the Environment Committee

Executive Nominations Committee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 8, 2023

The Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee

**SB 823 – Natural Resources – Annual State Park Pass – Discounts for Law Enforcement
Officers and First Responders**

Statement of Support by Bill Sponsor Senator Mary Beth Carozza

Thank you, Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and my fellow members of the distinguished Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee for allowing me to present Senate Bill 823 – Natural Resources - Annual State Park Pass - Discounts for Law Enforcement Officers and First Responders.

The Maryland Park Service passport allows for unlimited day-use admission to Maryland’s state parks and facilities, unlimited boat launching at all applicable state park facilities and a ten percent discount on state-operated concession items and boat rentals. These passes currently cost \$75 for Maryland residents and this legislation would create a \$40 discount for law enforcement officers and first responders, including firefighters, paramedics, emergency medical technicians, and 911 specialists who are Maryland residents.

We learned during the COVID-19 pandemic that access to the outdoors is essential for health and wellbeing. Maryland State Parks saw a 44% increase in visitation during the first six months of 2020 alone and it has been estimated that spending two hours or more outside each week positively impacts general health and wellbeing.

The public safety sector has been facing an acute workforce shortage that puts our neighborhoods and communities at risk. The Maryland State Firemen’s Association and the Maryland Association of Counties have already partnered to support Senate Bill 414, Senator Augustine’s bill to form a task force to prioritize incentives to increase retention and recruitment for our firefighters, EMS, 911, and law enforcement. Senate Bill 823 simply allows our first responders and their families to benefit from the State Park pass discount effective this year.

Our first responders and law enforcement officers are on the front lines every day protecting our communities in high-stress environments. Maryland already offers veterans of the Armed Forces a day-use waiver, allowing them to enjoy our State Parks for free. Giving our emergency responders their own discount is a simple, meaningful way to not only thank them for their service but to promote the health and well being of our first responders.

I truly appreciate your kind attention and consideration, and I respectfully ask for a swift and favorable report on SB 823.

SB 823 testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Stephen Mizell

Position: FWA

Good afternoon, Chairman Feldman and, members of the committee.

My name is Stephen Mizell and, I am speaking to you today to urge a favorable report with an amendment to Senator Carozza's Bill, SB 823.

I am a retired firefighter/EMT-B from the City of Salisbury with 24 years in the fire service.

As you can imagine, during my 24 years as a firefighter, I have seen gruesome things.

Time went by, and I keep these traumatic events to myself because I didn't want to be seen as weak.

As a result, my mental health suffered.

Over the years, I have been diagnosed with anxiety, depression, and alcoholism.

Following my retirement, I was diagnosed with PTSD.

Now, here is the good news.

Anxiety, depression, alcoholism, and PTSD are treatable

I quit drinking in 2017.

In January of 2022 I found a therapist who specializes in helping law enforcement officers and first responders and that has been a tremendous help.

One of the recommendations that I received from my therapist was to spend more time outdoors.

I will use the remainder of my time explaining how this has helped me and could benefit others.

I do not handle being in large, noisy crowds very well.

Last year, I explored Assateague State Park for the first time.

I found that Assateague was large enough that overcrowding usually was not an issue and the noise levels did not bother me.

In fact, I did not experience any noticeable anxiety at all.

Another added benefit to visiting Assateague was my wife and I had a peaceful place where we could spend time together. This helped us reconnect with each other and improved our marriage.

Finally, the time spent outdoors in the sun, sand and water greatly improved my mood.

There are many components involved in improving the mental health of law enforcement officers and first responders and spending time in nature is just one of them

Allowing law enforcement officers and first responders to obtain an Annual State Park Pass at a discounted rate would help remove a barrier to a resource that could improve their mental health.

As I just said, I was diagnosed as having PTSD after I retired.

Please add retired law enforcement officers and first responders to the bill's language so they also will be included.

Once again, I urge a favorable report with this amendment to Senator Carozza's Bill, SB 823.

Thank you for your time.

