



April 1st, 2026

SB21

**Natural Resources - State Parks - Maryland Golden Age Pass
Environment and Transportation Committee**

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) offers this testimony in support of **Senate Bill 21**. The Maryland Catholic Conference (MCC) is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

Senate Bill 21 establishes the Maryland Golden Age Pass, which grants its holders free day-use entry to specific State parks. Additionally, it waives boat launch fees at any State Park for pass holders. The bill also extends free entry privileges to all passengers in the same vehicle as the pass holder under certain conditions.

This bill aligns with Catholic social teaching principles of care for creation and the common good. Ensuring that seniors can access and enjoy Maryland's parks honors the inherent dignity of older adults, many of whom live on fixed incomes and face increasing barriers to recreation and social connection. By reducing financial obstacles, the Golden Age Pass affirms that care for creation is not a privilege reserved for a few, but a shared responsibility and gift meant for all. Supporting this bill reflects the Church's call to care for creation while fostering community and equity.

This bill promotes accessibility to State parks for older residents, encouraging outdoor recreation, fostering community well-being, and enhancing mental and physical health. By removing financial barriers, it increases park usage and supports conservation awareness. The ability to bring family members along further strengthens bonds and fosters a sense of belonging and community. By supporting the Golden Age Pass, Maryland affirms its responsibility to care for older residents, protect creation, and ensure that the benefits of our shared natural resources remain accessible to all.

The Maryland Catholic Conference appreciates your consideration and respectfully urges a favorable report for **Senate Bill 21**.