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Education, Energy, and the
Environment Committee

Joint Committee on the Chesapeake and
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The Senate of Maryland ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SB 161 – State Park IDs for Veterans

I am Senator Bryan Simonaire presenting SB 161.

I worked with the *Department of Natural Resources* on this consensus legislation.

This bill does 2 main things:

- 1) Expands the veteran identification allowed to enter a state park free of charge, and
- 2) Allows former Maryland National Guard members free entrance into our state parks.

First, this bill expands the allowable identification forms used to allow veterans into state parks. With the recent passage of veteran notations on state professional licenses and identification cards, they will also be acceptable forms of identification, if this bill passes.

Secondly, under existing law, active-duty service members and all Maryland National Guard members are granted free access to State Parks.

To be clear, that means Maryland National Guard members who are not on active duty are granted free access as well.

However, the terminology used in the Veterans section excludes Maryland National Guard members if they didn't serve on active duty, even if they served Maryland and fulfilled their obligations.

The bill ensures parity and that we honor former Maryland National Guard members by granting them free access to state parks as well.

This lines up with current practice as well.

That is the bill and for all these reasons, I ask for your favorable consideration.