

FREE VETERANS FROM FEES ACT

SEPTEMBER 8, 2020.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. GRIJALVA, from the Committee on Natural Resources,
submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 1702]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Natural Resources, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 1702) to waive the application fee for any special use permit for veterans demonstrations and special events at war memorials on Federal land, and for other purposes, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon with amendments and recommends that the bill as amended do pass.

The amendments are as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Free Veterans from Fees Act”.

SEC. 2. WAIVER OF SPECIAL USE PERMIT APPLICATION FEE FOR VETERANS DEMONSTRATIONS AND SPECIAL EVENTS.

(a) WAIVER.—The application fee for any special use permit solely for a veterans’ demonstration or special event at war memorials on land administered by the National Park Service in the District of Columbia and its environs shall be waived.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) DEMONSTRATION; SPECIAL EVENT.—The terms “demonstration” and “special events” have the meanings given those terms in section 7.96 of title 36, Code of Federal Regulations.

(2) DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA AND ITS ENVIRONS.—The term “the District of Columbia and its environs” has the meaning given that term in section 8902(a) of title 40, United States Code.

(3) GOLD STAR FAMILY.—The term “Gold Star Family” includes any individual described in section 3.2 of Department of Defense Instruction 1348.36.

(4) VETERAN.—The term “veteran” has the meaning given that term in section 101(2) of title 38, United States Code.

(5) VETERANS DEMONSTRATION OR SPECIAL EVENT.—The term “veterans’ demonstration or special event” means a demonstration or special event whose primary purpose is to commemorate or honor individuals present at the dem-

onstration or special event, either because of their service as veterans or their status as a Gold Star Family.

(6) WAR MEMORIAL.—The term “war memorial” means any memorial or monument which has been erected or dedicated to commemorate a military unit, military group, war, conflict, victory, or peace.

(c) APPLICABILITY.—This section shall apply to any special use permit application submitted after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(d) APPLICABILITY OF EXISTING LAWS.—Permit applicants remain subject to all other laws, regulations, and policies regarding the application, issuance and execution of special use permits for a veterans’ demonstration or special event at war memorials on land administered by the National Park Service in the District of Columbia and its environs.

Amend the title so as to read:

A bill to waive the application fee for any special use permit for veterans’ demonstrations and special events at war memorials on land administered by the National Park Service in the District of Columbia and its environs, and for other purposes.

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of H.R. 1702 is to waive the application fee for any special use permit for veterans’ demonstrations and special events at war memorials on land administered by the National Park Service in the District of Columbia and its environs.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

Typically, applications for special park use permits from the National Park Service require applicants to pay a fee to offset the initial costs of processing the application. However, the National Park Service has a longstanding practice of waiving application fees for special use permits for veterans’ demonstrations or special events at war memorials.¹

As reported, H.R. 1702 would codify a version of this routine practice and policy, in particular by waiving special use permit application fees for demonstrations or special events at national war memorials located in the District of Columbia and its environs when the primary purpose is to commemorate or honor a group of people because of their service as veterans or their status as a Gold Star Family.

It is likely that if H.R. 1702 is considered by the full House of Representatives, the bill will be revised such that the waiver applies only to special events at national war memorials located in the District of Columbia and its environs when a majority of attendees will be veterans or Gold Star Families.

COMMITTEE ACTION

H.R. 1702 was introduced on March 12, 2019, by Representative Greg Steube (R–FL). The bill was referred solely to the Committee on Natural Resources, and within the Committee to the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands. On December 4, 2019, the Subcommittee held a hearing on the bill. On January 15, 2020, the Natural Resources Committee met to consider the bill. The Subcommittee was discharged by unanimous

¹Hearing Before the Subcomm. on Nat’l Parks, Forests, and Pub. Lands of the H. Comm. on Nat. Res., 116th Cong. (2019) (not printed), <https://docs.house.gov/Committee/Calendar/ByEvent.aspx?EventID=110280>, (statement of David Vela, Deputy Dir., Nat’l Park Serv.), <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/II/II10/20191204/110280/HHRG-116-II10-Wstate-VelaR-20191204.pdf>.

consent. Chair Raúl M. Grijalva (D–AZ) offered an amendment in the nature of a substitute. Chair Grijalva offered an amendment designated Grijalva #110 to the amendment in the nature of a substitute. The amendment was agreed to by unanimous consent. The amendment in the nature of a substitute offered by Chair Grijalva, as amended, was agreed to by unanimous consent. The bill, as amended, was adopted and ordered favorably reported to the House of Representatives by unanimous consent.

HEARINGS

For the purposes of section 103(i) of H. Res. 6 of the 116th Congress—the following hearing was used to develop or consider H.R. 1702: legislative hearing by the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands held on December 4, 2019.

COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Regarding clause 2(b)(1) of rule X and clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Natural Resources’ oversight findings and recommendations are reflected in the body of this report.

COMPLIANCE WITH HOUSE RULE XIII AND CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET ACT

1. *Cost of Legislation and the Congressional Budget Act.* With respect to the requirements of clause 3(c)(2) and (3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and sections 308(a) and 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee has received the following estimate for the bill from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office:

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, February 14, 2020.

Hon. RAÚL M. GRIJALVA,
*Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 1702, the Free Veterans From Fees Act.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is David Hughes.

Sincerely,

PHILLIP L. SWAGEL,
Director.

Enclosure.

| H.R. 1702, Free Veterans From Fees Act | | | |
|--|------|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| As ordered reported by the House Committee on Natural Resources on January 15, 2020 | | | |
| By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars | 2020 | 2020-2025 | 2020-2030 |
| Direct Spending (Outlays) | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Revenues | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays) | * | * | not estimated |
| Statutory pay-as-you-go procedures apply? | No | Mandate Effects | |
| Increases on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2031? | No | Contains intergovernmental mandate? | No |
| | | Contains private-sector mandate? | No |
| * = between zero and \$500,000. | | | |

H.R. 1702 would waive the application fee for special-use permits that are obtained for veterans' demonstrations or special events at war memorials on National Park Service (NPS) land in Washington, D.C. Under current law, the NPS is authorized to recover costs associated with providing special-use permits; such recoveries are credited to the current fiscal year appropriation as discretionary offsetting receipts.

The NPS does not currently charge application fees for veterans' demonstrations in Washington, D.C., and usually waives such fees for special events at war memorials that commemorate veterans. Although implementing H.R. 1702 could result in an insignificant reduction in discretionary offsetting receipts, because those receipts would probably be spent soon after their receipt, the net effect on spending subject to appropriation would be negligible.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is David Hughes. The estimate was reviewed by H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy Director of Budget Analysis.

2. General Performance Goals and Objectives. As required by clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII, the general performance goals and objectives of this bill are to waive the application fee for any special use permit for veterans' demonstrations and special events at war memorials on land administered by the National Park Service in the District of Columbia and its environs.

EARMARK STATEMENT

This bill does not contain any Congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined under clause 9(e), 9(f), and 9(g) of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

UNFUNDED MANDATES REFORM ACT STATEMENT

This bill contains no unfunded mandates.

EXISTING PROGRAMS

This bill does not establish or reauthorize a program of the federal government known to be duplicative of another program.

APPLICABILITY TO LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The Committee finds that the legislation does not relate to the terms and conditions of employment or access to public services or accommodations within the meaning of section 102(b)(3) of the Congressional Accountability Act.

PREEMPTION OF STATE, LOCAL, OR TRIBAL LAW

Any preemptive effect of this bill over state, local, or tribal law is intended to be consistent with the bill's purposes and text and the Supremacy Clause of Article VI of the U.S. Constitution.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

If enacted, this bill would make no changes to existing law.

SUPPLEMENTAL, MINORITY, ADDITIONAL, OR DISSENTING VIEWS

None.

