

ALEXANDER LOFGREN VETERANS IN PARKS (VIP) ACT

—————
JULY 26, 2021.—Ordered to be printed
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Mr. GRIJALVA, from the Committee on Natural Resources,
submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 4300]

The Committee on Natural Resources, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 4300) to direct the Secretary of the Interior to make free National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Passes available to members of the Armed Forces, 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 “Alexander Lofgren Veterans in Parks Act” or the “VIP Act”.

SEC. 2. RECREATION PASSES.

Section 805 of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (Public Law 108-447; 118 Stat. 3385; 16 U.S.C. 6804) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(4), by striking “age and disability discounted” and inserting “age discount and lifetime”; and

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in the heading, by striking “DISCOUNTED” and inserting “FREE AND DISCOUNTED”;

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in the heading, by striking “DISABILITY DISCOUNT” and inserting “LIFETIME PASSES”; and

(ii) by striking subparagraph (B) and inserting the following:

“(B) Any veteran who provides adequate proof of military service as determined by the Secretary.

“(C) Any member of a Gold Star Family who meets the eligibility requirements of section 3.2 of Department of Defense Instruction 1348.36 (or a successor instruction).”; and

(C) in paragraph (3)—

(i) in the heading, by striking “GOLD STAR FAMILIES PARKS PASS” and inserting “ANNUAL PASSES”; and

(ii) by striking “members of” and all that follows through the end of the sentence and inserting “members of the Armed Forces and their de-

pendents who provide adequate proof of eligibility for such pass as determined by the Secretary.”.

Amend the title so as to read:

A bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to make free National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Passes available to members of the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of H.R. 4300 is to direct the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to make free National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Passes available to members of the Armed Forces, veterans, and Gold Star Families.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

H.R. 4300 would provide free annual America the Beautiful Passes to current military service members and free lifetime America the Beautiful Passes to veterans and members of Gold Star Families. The America the Beautiful Pass provides access to more than 2,000 federal recreation areas, including our National Parks, National Forests, and Wildlife Refuges.

Although the America the Beautiful annual pass became free for veterans and Gold Star Families in 2020, this change for veterans has never been codified. H.R. 4300 would codify this practice and make them into lifetime passes instead of annual passes. The bill would also codify no-cost annual passes for current service members, which would then be converted into lifetime passes once they leave the military.

The bill was amended at markup to change the short title of the bill to the “Alexander Lofgren Veterans in Parks (VIP) Act” in honor of Mr. Alexander Lofgren, a Congressional staffer for Chair Raúl M. Grijalva who tragically lost his life during an outing in Death Valley National Park. After serving for four years in the U.S. Army as a combat engineer, and his deployment to Afghanistan in 2011, Mr. Lofgren returned home to Arizona to serve in Chair Grijalva’s office as part of the Wounded Warrior Fellowship Program, handling issues and constituent casework concerning veterans’ health care and benefits. As one of the greatest proponents for using our nation’s public lands as both a way for returning veterans to reconnect with nature and to heal, renaming this legislation after Mr. Lofgren is a fitting tribute to his legacy and service to our nation.

COMMITTEE ACTION

H.R. 4300 was introduced on July 1, 2021, by Representative Mariannette Miller-Meeks (R-IA). The bill was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture. Within the former Committee, the bill was referred to the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands. On July 13, 2021, the Subcommittee held a hearing on the bill. On July 14, 2021, the Natural Resources Committee met to consider the bill. The Subcommittee was discharged by unanimous consent. Chair Raúl M. Grijalva (D-AZ) offered an amendment designated Grijalva-Westerman #1. The amendment was agreed to by unani-

mous consent. The bill, as amended, was adopted and ordered favorably reported to the House of Representatives by unanimous consent.

HEARINGS

For the purposes of clause 3(c)(6) of House rule XIII, the following hearing was used to develop or consider this measure: hearing by the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands held on July 13, 2021.

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) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 308(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and with respect to requirements of clause (3)(c)(3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee has requested but not received a cost estimate for this bill from the Director of Congressional Budget Office. The Committee adopts as its own cost estimate the forthcoming cost estimate of the Director of the Congressional Budget Office, should such cost estimate be made available before House passage of the bill.

The Committee has requested but not received from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office a statement as to whether this bill contains any new budget authority, spending authority, credit authority, or an increase or decrease in revenues or tax expenditures.

Congressional Budget Office staff have informed the Committee on a preliminary, informal, nonbinding basis that the bill would likely result in an insignificant change in direct spending.

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 direct the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to make free National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Passes available to members of the Armed Forces, veterans, and Gold Star Families.

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

An estimate of Federal mandates prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 423 of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act was not made available to the Committee in time for the filing of this report. The Chair of the Committee shall cause such estimate to be printed in the *Congressional Record* upon its receipt by the Committee.

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 MADE BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

In compliance with clause 3(e) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, changes in existing law made by the bill, as reported, are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new matter is printed in italics, and existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

FEDERAL LANDS RECREATION ENHANCEMENT ACT

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DIVISION J—OTHER MATTERS

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TITLE VIII—FEDERAL LANDS RECREATION ENHANCEMENT ACT

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SEC. 805. RECREATION PASSES.

(a) AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL—THE NATIONAL PARKS AND FEDERAL RECREATIONAL LANDS PASS.—

(1) AVAILABILITY AND USE.—The Secretaries shall establish, and may charge a fee for, an interagency national pass to be known as the “America the Beautiful—the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass”, which shall cover the entrance fee and standard amenity recreation fee for all Federal recreational lands and waters for which an entrance fee or a standard amenity recreation fee is charged.

(2) IMAGE COMPETITION FOR RECREATION PASS.—The Secretaries shall hold an annual competition to select the image to be used on the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass for a year. The competition shall be open to the public and used as a means to educate the American people about Federal recreational lands and waters.

(3) NOTICE OF ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretaries shall publish a notice in the Federal Register when the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass is first established and available for purchase.

(4) DURATION.—The National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass shall be valid for a period of 12 months from the date of the issuance of the recreation pass to a passholder, except in the case of the **[age and disability discounted]** *age discount and lifetime* passes issued under subsection (b).

(5) PRICE.—The Secretaries shall establish the price at which the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass will be sold to the public.

(6) SALES LOCATIONS AND MARKETING.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall sell the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass at all Federal recreational lands and waters at which an entrance fee or a standard amenity recreation fee is charged and at such other locations as the Secretaries consider appropriate and feasible.

(B) USE OF VENDORS.—The Secretary may enter into fee management agreements as provided in section 6.

(C) MARKETING.—The Secretaries shall take such actions as are appropriate to provide for the active marketing of the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass.

(7) ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES.—The Secretaries shall issue guidelines on administration of the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass, which shall include agreement on price, the distribution of revenues between the Federal land management agencies, the sharing of costs, benefits provided, marketing and design, adequate documentation for discounts under subsection (b), and the issuance of that recreation pass to volunteers. The Secretaries shall take into consideration all relevant visitor and sales data available in establishing the guidelines.

(8) DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION AGREEMENTS.—The Secretaries may enter into cooperative agreements with governmental and nongovernmental entities for the development and implementation of the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass Program.

(9) PROHIBITION ON OTHER NATIONAL RECREATION PASSES.—The Secretary may not establish any national recreation pass, except as provided in this section.

(b) **[DISCOUNTED]** *FREE AND DISCOUNTED* PASSES.—

(1) AGE DISCOUNT.—

(A) The Secretary shall make the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass available to any United States citizen or person domiciled in the United States who is 62 years of age or older, if the citizen or person pro-

vides adequate proof of such age and such citizenship or residency. The National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass made available under this paragraph shall be available—

(i) for a period of 12 months from the date of the issuance, at a cost of \$20; and

(ii) for the lifetime of the passholder, at a cost equal to the cost of the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass purchased under subsection (a).

(B) The Secretary shall issue a pass under subparagraph (A)(ii), for no additional cost, to any individual who provides evidence, under policies and guidelines determined by the Secretary, that the individual has purchased a pass under subparagraph (A)(i) for each of the 4 years prior to being issued a pass under this subparagraph.

(2) **【DISABILITY DISCOUNT】 LIFETIME PASSES.**—The Secretary shall make the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass available, without charge and for the lifetime of the passholder, to the following:

(A) Any United States citizen or person domiciled in the United States who has been medically determined to be permanently disabled, within the meaning of the term “disability” under section 3 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12102), if the citizen or person provides adequate proof of the disability and such citizenship or residency.

【(B) Any veteran who has been found to have a service-connected disability under title 38, United States Code.】

(B) Any veteran who provides adequate proof of military service as determined by the Secretary.

(C) Any member of a Gold Star Family who meets the eligibility requirements of section 3.2 of Department of Defense Instruction 1348.36 (or a successor instruction).

(3) **【GOLD STAR FAMILIES PARKS PASS】 ANNUAL PASSES.**—The Secretary shall make the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass available, at no cost, to **【members of Gold Star Families who meet the eligibility requirements of section 3.2 of Department of Defense Instruction 1348.36 (or a successor instruction).】** *members of the Armed Forces and their dependents who provide adequate proof of eligibility for such pass as determined by the Secretary.*

(c) **SITE-SPECIFIC AGENCY PASSES.**—The Secretary may establish and charge a fee for a site-specific pass that will cover the entrance fee or standard amenity recreation fee for particular Federal recreational lands and waters for a specified period not to exceed 12 months.

(d) **REGIONAL MULTIENTITY PASSES.**—

(1) **PASSES AUTHORIZED.**—The Secretary may establish and charge a fee for a regional multientity pass that will be accepted by one or more Federal land management agencies or by one or more governmental or nongovernmental entities for a specified period not to exceed 12 months. To include a Federal land management agency or governmental or nongovernmental entity over which the Secretary does not have jurisdiction, the

Secretary shall obtain the consent of the head of such agency or entity.

(2) REGIONAL MULTIENTITY PASS AGREEMENT.—In order to establish a regional multientity pass under this subsection, the Secretary shall enter into a regional multientity pass agreement with all the participating agencies or entities on price, the distribution of revenues between participating agencies or entities, the sharing of costs, benefits provided, marketing and design, and the issuance of the pass to volunteers. The Secretary shall take into consideration all relevant visitor and sales data available when entering into this agreement.

(e) DISCOUNTED OR FREE ADMISSION DAYS OR USE.—The Secretary may provide for a discounted or free admission day or use of Federal recreational lands and waters.

(f) EFFECT ON EXISTING PASSPORTS AND PERMITS.—

(1) EXISTING PASSPORTS.—A passport issued under section 4 of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 or title VI of the National Parks Omnibus Management Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-391), such as the Golden Eagle Passport, the Golden Age Passport, the Golden Access Passport, and the National Parks Passport, that was valid on the day before the publication of the Federal Register notice required under subsection (a)(3) shall be valid in accordance with the terms agreed to at the time of issuance of the passport, to the extent practicable, and remain in effect until expired, lost, or stolen.

(2) PERMITS.—A permit issued under section 4 of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 that was valid on the day before the date of the enactment of this Act shall be valid and remain in effect until expired, revoked, or suspended.

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COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Agriculture
 Room 1301, Longworth House Office Building
 Washington, DC 20515-6001

(202) 225-2171

July 22, 2021

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The Honorable Raul M. Grijalva
 Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources
 U.S. House of Representatives
 1324 Longworth House Office Building
 Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This letter confirms our mutual understanding regarding H.R. 4300, the *Alexander Lofgren Veterans in Parks (VIP) Act*. Thank you for collaborating with the Committee on Agriculture on the matters within our jurisdiction.

The Committee on Agriculture will forego any further consideration of this bill so that it may proceed expeditiously to the House floor for consideration. However, by foregoing consideration at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over any subject matter contained in this or similar legislation. We request our Committee be consulted and involved as this bill moves forward so that we may address any remaining issues in our jurisdiction. The Committee on Agriculture also reserves the right to seek appointment of any appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this or similar legislation and ask that you support any such request.

We would appreciate a response to this letter confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 4300, and request that a copy of our letters on this matter by published in the Congressional Record during Floor consideration.

Sincerely,



David Scott
 Chairman

cc: The Honorable Glenn Thompson
 The Honorable Bruce Westerman
 The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker
 The Honorable Jason Smith, Parliamentarian

RAÚL M. GRIJALVA OF ARIZONA
CHAIRMAN

DAVID WATKINS
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July 22, 2021

The Honorable David Scott
Chair
Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Scott:

I write to acknowledge your letter dated July 22, 2021, stating that the Committee on Agriculture will forgo formal consideration of H.R. 4300, the Alexander Lofgren Veterans in Parks (VIP) Act.

The Committee on Natural Resources confirms our mutual understanding that your Committee does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this or similar legislation. Additionally, the Committee on Natural Resources confirms our mutual understanding that the Committee on Agriculture will be appropriately consulted and involved as the bill or similar legislation moves forward so that you may address any remaining issues within your Rule X jurisdiction. I am pleased to support your request to name members of the Committee on Agriculture to any conference committee to consider such provisions.

I will ensure that this exchange of letters is included in the *Congressional Record* as part of the committee report for H.R. 4300. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation and look forward to working with you as this measure moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,



Raúl M. Grijalva
Chair
House Natural Resources Committee

Cc: The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House
The Honorable Bruce Westerman, Ranking Member, Committee on Natural Resources
The Honorable Glenn Thompson, Ranking Member, Committee on Agriculture
The Honorable Jason Smith, Parliamentarian

SUPPLEMENTAL, MINORITY, ADDITIONAL, OR DISSENTING VIEWS
None.

