

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## HB 1177

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Community Development, Housing & Tribal Affairs

**Title:** An act relating to supporting access to state recreation lands by disabled veterans.

**Brief Description:** Supporting access to state recreation lands by disabled veterans.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Muri, Kilduff, Ryu, Smith, Shea, Bergquist, Stanford, Sells, Kretz, McDonald, Reeves, Irwin and Tarleton.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Community Development, Housing & Tribal Affairs: 2/2/17, 1/9/18, 1/16/18 [DPS].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Provides holders of the Lifetime Veteran's Disability Pass access to Department of Natural Resources and Department of Fish and Wildlife recreational lands and the same access as the Discover Pass.
- Requires Lifetime Veteran's Disability Pass recipients to recertify every five years.
- Eliminates the exemption of reservation fees for Lifetime Veteran's Disability Pass recipients.
- Requires State Parks to develop an access pass for the Lifetime Veteran's Disability Pass.

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**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, HOUSING & TRIBAL AFFAIRS**

**Majority Report:** The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives Ryu, Chair; Macri, Vice Chair; Barkis, Ranking Minority Member; McCabe, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Jenkin, Reeves and Sawyer.

**Staff:** Sean Flynn (786-7124).

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Background:**

The State Parks and Recreation Commission (State Parks) charges admission and camping fees for state park access. Under the park passes program, the State Parks issues different park passes for specially designated groups that qualify for discounts or exemptions from park fees. The Lifetime Veteran's Disability Pass entitles any state resident who is a veteran with at least a 30 percent service-related disability to free admission to any state park and waiver of any campsite fees.

In 2011 the Legislature created the Discover Pass to help recover the costs for the operation and management of state lands used for recreational activities. The Discover Pass establishes a user fee for motor vehicle access to recreational areas managed by the State Parks, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) (collectively "the agencies").

A Discover Pass costs \$30 per year and may be used for up to two vehicles. A day-use permit is also available for \$10 per day. All money received from the Discover Pass and day-use permits sales are deposited into a special account and distributed to the agencies on a proportional basis.

Certain passes and permits issued by the agencies exempt the user from the Discover Pass and day use permits, including: the Vehicle Access Pass issued by the DFW to persons who purchase certain hunting, fishing, and wildlife viewing permits; camper registrations; the Annual Natural Investment Permit issued by the State Parks; and a Sno-Park seasonal permit issued by the State Parks for access to designated parks during the wintertime.

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**Summary of Substitute Bill:**

The Lifetime Veteran's Disability Pass is expanded to include access to DNR and DFW recreational lands, and is the equivalent of the Discover Pass. The Lifetime Veteran's Disability Pass exemption from reservation fees is eliminated.

State Parks must develop an access pass to display the Lifetime Veteran's Disability Pass, to be used the same as the Discover Pass. Recipients of the Lifetime Veteran's Disability Pass must recertify every five years that he or she continues to meet eligibility requirements.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:**

The substitute includes the expansion of the Lifetime Veteran's Disability Pass to include DNR and DFW recreational lands. It requires State Parks to create an access pass for the Lifetime Veteran's Disability Pass, similar to the Discover Pass. It requires recipients of the Lifetime Veteran's Disability Pass to recertify every five years. It removes the waiver of the penalty for failing to display a valid pass for persons who obtain a Lifetime Veteran's Disability Pass.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date of Substitute Bill:** The bill takes effect on July 1, 2019.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) The bill is a way to honor disabled veterans and provide greater access to recreational activities for those veterans.

(Opposed) None.

(Other) Last year, a budget proviso directed State Parks to engage in a facilitative process over the interim to study the equity, consistency, simplicity, and costs of recreational pass exemption policies. The process led to a comprehensive bill that incorporates much of the work of that process and includes the policy addressed in this bill.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Representative Muri, prime sponsor.

(Other) Todd Tatum, Washington State Parks; and Melinda Posner, Department of Fish and Wildlife.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.