ASSEMBLY, No. 1933

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:
Assemblywoman SERENA DIMASO
District 13 (Monmouth)

SYNOPSIS

Authorizes free admission to State parks and forests for certain veterans, military personnel, first responders, and police.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.

AN ACT concerning admission to State parks and forests and amending P.L.1983, c.324.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. Section 12 of P.L.1983, c.324 (C.13:1L-12) is amended to read as follows:

12. a. The department shall not charge an admission fee for entrance into a State park or forest by any person who is:

(1) a resident of the State of 62 or more years of age or who is totally disabled **[**or who is**]** ;

(2) an active member of the New Jersey National Guard who has completed Initial Active Duty Training ;

(3) an active member of any branch or department of the Armed Forces of the United States, or reserves component thereof;

(4) a veteran; or

(5) a first responder who is a resident of New Jersey.

b. Any immediate family member of a person who qualifies for free admission to a State park or forest pursuant to paragraph (2), (3), (4), or (5) of subsection a. of this section shall also be entitled to free admission, provided the person qualifying for free admission pursuant to paragraph (2), (3), (4), or (5) of subsection a. of this section is physically present with the immediate family member.

c. The department shall prescribe by regulation the types of evidence that may be used to qualify persons for the benefits of this **[**subsection**]** section.

d. As used in this section **[**,**]** :

"First responder" means a State, interstate, county, or municipal law enforcement officer, paid or volunteer firefighter, paid or volunteer member of a duly incorporated first aid, emergency, ambulance, or rescue squad association, or any other individual who, in the course of employment, is dispatched to the scene of a motor vehicle accident or other emergency situation for the purpose of providing medical care or other assistance.

"Immediate family member" means a spouse, child, step child, father, mother, mother-in-law, father-in-law, grandmother, grandfather, or grandchild living in the same household with the person qualifying for free admission pursuant to paragraph (2), (3), (4), or (5) of subsection a. of this section.

"Initial Active Duty Training" means Basic Military Training, for members of the New Jersey Air National Guard, and Basic Combat Training and Advanced Individual Training, for members of the New Jersey Army National Guard.

"Veteran" means any resident of the State who has been honorably discharged or released under honorable circumstances from active military service in any of the Armed Forces of the

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

United States, or reserves component thereof, or any honorably discharged member of the American Merchant Marine who served during World War II and is declared by the United States Department of Defense to be eligible for federal veterans' benefits and any officer, soldier, sailor, marine, airman, nurse or army field clerk, who has served in the active military or naval service of the United States and has or shall be discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable.

(cf: P.L.1993, c.304, s.1)

2. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill would expand upon current law to provide that the following persons also would be entitled to free admission to State parks and forests: (1) an active member of any branch or department of the Armed Forces of the United States, or reserves component thereof; (2) a veteran; (3) a first responder who is a resident of New Jersey; and (4) any immediate family member of a person who qualifies for free admission to a State park or forest.

Under the bill, a "first responder" is defined as a State, county, or municipal law enforcement officer, paid or volunteer firefighter, paid or volunteer member of a duly incorporated first aid, emergency, ambulance, or rescue squad association, or any other individual who, in the course of employment, is dispatched to the scene of a motor vehicle accident or other emergency situation for the purpose of providing medical care or other assistance. In addition, an "immediate family member" is defined as a spouse, child, step child, father, mother, mother-in-law, father-in-law, grandmother, grandfather, or grandchild living in the same household with the person qualifying for free admission, pursuant to paragraph (2), (3), (4), or (5) of subsection a. of the bill.

Current law already provides free admission to State residents who are active members of the New Jersey National Guard, totally disabled, or 62 or more years of age. This bill would expand that eligibility to the categories of persons described above.