

Legislative Analysis



RECREATION PASSPORT FEE WAIVER

Phone: (517) 373-8080
<http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa>

House Bill 4380 (substitute H-2 as reported from committee)
Sponsor: Rep. John Bizon, M.D.

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

House Bill 4381 (substitute H-1 as reported from committee)
Sponsor: Rep. Jason Wentworth

Committee: Military and Veterans Affairs
Complete to 12-7-17

SUMMARY:

House Bills 4380 and 4381 would respectively amend the Michigan Vehicle Code and the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to provide for a waiver of recreation passport fees for totally disabled veterans.

Currently under the Vehicle Code, when obtaining or renewing a license plate, a Michigan motorist can pay a fee to obtain a recreation passport that grants access to all state-owned parks and public boating access sites. Motor vehicles with certain special license plates, including disabled veteran plates under Section 803f, are exempt from the requirement that a recreation passport be purchased to enter those sites. House Bills 4380 and 4381 would extend this exemption to all totally disabled veterans.

House Bill 4380 would amend Section 805 of the Michigan Vehicle Code to require a registration for a totally disabled veteran to be exempt from payment of the recreation passport fee. A tab or sticker issued for registration for a totally disabled veteran would be marked as if the recreation passport fee had been paid.

For purposes of the bill, “totally disabled veteran” would mean, as described in Section 803f of the Vehicle Code, an individual who was honorably discharged from the armed services and who has been determined to have a service-connected total or permanent total disability rating by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs or a branch of the uniformed armed services.

MCL 257.805

House Bill 4381 would amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to specify that, for the operator of a resident motor vehicle to gain entry to a state park or public boating access site, any registration tab or sticker that shows that the recreation passport fee has been paid must show that the fee has been paid for that motor vehicle.

MCL 324.74116 and 324.78119

House Bills 4380 and 4381 are tie-barred to each other, which means that neither can take effect unless both are enacted.

Both bills would take effect February 19, 2019.

FISCAL IMPACT:

House Bills 4380 and 4381 would reduce revenue for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) by exempting honorably discharged veterans who are totally disabled from the recreation passport requirement for entry to state park facilities. It is unclear how many recreation passports are purchased by this population, so the extent of a potential revenue loss is also unclear. Recreation passport sales generated approximately \$27.6 million in FY 2015-16 revenue for the DNR; the department uses this revenue to support state parks, local public recreation facilities, and forest recreation programs, as well as cultural and historical programs, throughout the state. The bills are unlikely to directly affect costs or revenues for local units of government, although a loss of revenue at the state level could result in a reduction in available state funding for local recreation facilities.

House Bills 4380 and 4381 would have an indeterminate, but likely limited, cost impact on the Secretary of State due to the cost of programming revisions to its automated administrative information systems. The bills would have no direct impact on the Secretary of State due to the proposed waiver of recreation passport fees. The Secretary of State received \$23.3 million in recreation passport fees in fiscal year 2015-16 and is authorized to collect \$1 million each fiscal year to support administrative costs before funds are allocated to state parks as provided by MCL 324.2045(1).

POSITIONS:

The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs supports the bills. (11-28-17)

The American Legion supports the bills. (11-28-17)

The Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency supports the bills. (11-28-17)

Vietnam Veterans of America supports the bills. (11-28-17)

A representative of the office of the Secretary of State testified on 11-28-17 and is neutral with concerns on the bills. (12-7-17)

A representative of the Department of Natural Resources testified on 11-28-17 and has no position on the bill. (12-7-17)

Legislative Analyst: E. Best
Fiscal Analysts: Michael Cnossen
Austin Scott

■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.