



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Parks and Recreation Department

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February 1, 2022

RE: Testimony on HB 4066

Chair Grayber, Vice-Chairs Lewis and Meek and Members of the Committee,

While Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) has no position on HB 4066, the agency would like to provide information about the Special Access Pass program.

Currently, the Special Access Pass program is open to all veterans with a service-connected disability throughout the United States and foster families and adoptive foster families in Oregon. Qualified veterans in the program are eligible for ten nights of camping free of charge each month within an Oregon State Park or Oregon Department of Forestry campground. Program participants also receive free day use at all Oregon State Parks year-round.

Service-connected disabled veterans apply for a Special Access Pass by submitting an online application and documentation certifying a service-connected disability rating of 0% or greater. The card is valid for ten years and can be renewed with an address and signature verification. There is no cost to participate in this program.

Currently, 33,199 service-connected disabled veterans are active Special Access Pass program participants, 70% are Oregon residents. In the last biennium, OPRD waived \$3.4 million in camping fees for veterans in this program.

In 2019, OPRD held a series of focus groups and conducted an electronic survey with disabled veterans as part of a program review. Of the nearly 4,000 participants responding to the survey, 96% were satisfied or very satisfied with the Special Access Pass program. Based on feedback received during this review, the agency extended the length of time between card renewals, clarified stay limits and improved tracking of reservations.

Oregon Parks and Recreation Department operates the state park system without any General Fund revenue. State parks are funded through a combination of park visitor revenue, a share of the recreation vehicle registration fee—those two together make up more than half the funding—and a share of constitutionally-dedicated Lottery approved by Oregon voters in 1999 and 2010. As an agency, we are careful to balance discounts or fee waiver programs offered to help minimize the costs passed on to all visitors.



Oregon Parks and Recreation Department Special Access Pass for Veterans with Disabilities

Program Results

- Camping fees waived:
 - \$3,344,550 in 17-19 biennium.
 - \$3,442,339 in 19-21 biennium.
- 33,199 active passholders.
 - 70% Oregon residents.
 - Passholders in all 50 states.
- 10,544 additional passholders with recently expired cards.

Eligibility

- Any US Veteran with a service-connected disability.

Benefits

- Free camping for up to 10 nights per calendar month in a tent, RV or horse site.
- Free day use at any state park.
- Free showers at campgrounds that offer showers to non-campers.

Enrollment

- Apply [online](#) and provide proof of service-connected disability.

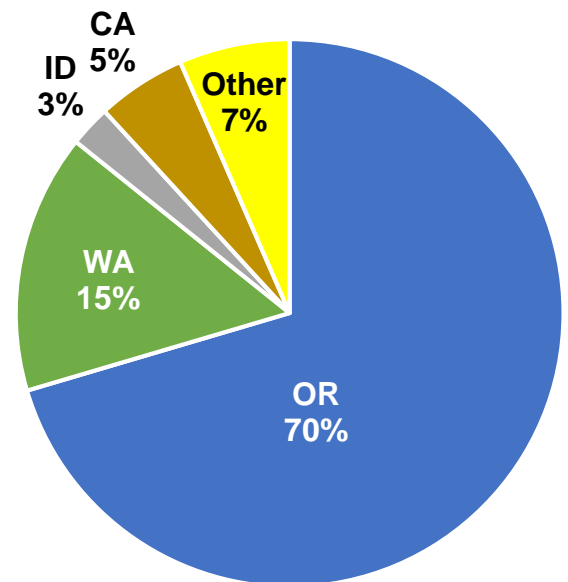
Process

- Program participants receive a card via mail valid for 10 years.
- Pass number utilized to reserve campsites online (reservation fee applies).
- Veteran must be onsite in order to receive benefit.
- Does not cover costs for yurts, cabins, group sites or extra vehicle fees.

Notes

- Passes are also valid for free camping in Oregon Department of Forestry campgrounds.
- Active duty military members on leave may have campsite or day use fees reimbursed.
- Foster and adoptive foster families may qualify for similar Special Access Pass program.

Active Special Access Passholders



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