

**Karen Kwan** proposes the following substitute bill:

**Veteran Access to State Parks**

2025 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

**Chief Sponsor: Karen Kwan**

House Sponsor: Matthew H. Gwynn

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**LONG TITLE**

**General Description:**

This bill addresses a program that offers a discounted annual pass to state parks for qualified veterans.

**Highlighted Provisions:**

This bill:

- creates a program, as funding allows, that offers a discounted annual pass to state parks to qualified veterans who are residents of the state;
  - requires the Division of State Parks to offer the discounted veteran pass at a reduction of at least 25% of the price of a state parks annual day-use pass;
  - provides for the automatic repeal of the discounted annual pass program after three years;
- and
- grants rulemaking authority to establish the program.

**Money Appropriated in this Bill:**

This bill appropriates \$300,000 in operating and capital budgets for fiscal year 2026, all of which is from the General Fund.

**Other Special Clauses:**

None

**Utah Code Sections Affected:**

AMENDS:

**63I-2-279 (Effective 05/07/25)**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2024, Third Special Session, Chapter 5

**79-4-1002 (Effective 05/07/25)**, as enacted by Laws of Utah 2024, Chapter 376

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*Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*

Section 1. Section **63I-2-279** is amended to read:

**63I-2-279 (Effective 05/07/25). Repeal dates: Title 79.**

- (1) Section 79-2-206, Transition, is repealed July 1, 2024.
- (2) Section 79-2-407, Study of funding for water infrastructure costs, is repealed July 1, 2025.
- (3) Subsection 79-4-1002(2), regarding a ~~[pilot-]~~program for veteran ~~[free]~~ discounted admission to state parks, is repealed July 1, ~~[2025]~~ 2028.
- (4) Section 79-7-303, Zion National Park Support Programs Restricted Account, is repealed July 1, 2024.

Section 2. Section **79-4-1002** is amended to read:

**79-4-1002 (Effective 05/07/25). Veteran access to state parks.**

- (1) The division shall make rules, in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act, to grant free admission to state parks to an honorably discharged veteran who:
- (a) is a resident of the state; and
  - (b) has a current service-connected disability rating issued by the United States Veterans Benefits Administration.
- ~~(2)(a) The division shall offer, as funding allows, a discounted annual day-use pass to state parks to a veteran who:~~
- ~~(i) is a resident of this state; and~~
  - ~~(ii) is generally or honorably discharged from military service.~~
- ~~(b) The division shall offer the discounted veteran pass described in Subsection (2)(a) at a reduction of at least 25% of the price of a state parks annual day-use pass.~~
- ~~(c) The division may make rules to establish the program described in this Subsection (2).~~
- ~~[(2)(a) Beginning on July 1, 2024, and ending on June 30, 2025, the division shall offer a pilot program that grants free admission to state parks to a veteran who:]~~
- ~~[(i) is a resident of the state; and]~~
  - ~~[(ii) has an Interagency Military-Lifetime Pass for national parks and federal recreational lands.]~~
- ~~[(b) The division may make rules to establish the pilot program described in Subsection (2)(a).]~~

**Section 3. FY 2026 Appropriations.**

The following sums of money are appropriated for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026. These are additions to amounts previously appropriated for fiscal year 2026.

63 Subsection 3(a). **Operating and Capital Budgets**

64 Under the terms and conditions of Title 63J, Chapter 1, Budgetary Procedures Act, the  
65 Legislature appropriates the following sums of money from the funds or accounts indicated for  
66 the use and support of the government of the state of Utah.

67 ITEM 1 To Department of Veterans and Military Affairs - DVMA Pass Through

68 From General Fund 300,000

69 Schedule of Programs:

70 DVMA Pass Through 300,000

71 The Legislature intends that the Department of  
72 Veterans and Military Affairs pass through the  
73 appropriation under this section to the Division of State  
74 Parks to pay for discounted veteran admission to state  
75 parks in accordance with Subsection 79-4-1002(2).

76 Section 4. **Effective Date.**

77 This bill takes effect on May 7, 2025.