

Department of Planning and Budget 2013 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number: SB991

House of Origin	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Introduced	<input type="checkbox"/> Substitute	<input type="checkbox"/> Engrossed
Second House	<input type="checkbox"/> In Committee	<input type="checkbox"/> Substitute	<input type="checkbox"/> Enrolled

2. Patron: Miller

3. Committee: General Laws and Technology

4. Title: Department of Veterans Services; veterans identification card/discount on state-operated attraction.

5. Summary: This bill provides a 50 percent discount on the admission fee to all state-operated attractions for a Virginia veteran who presents a valid veterans identification card issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). The discounted admission fee shall apply to the card holder and up to five persons accompanying him to such attraction. The bill also requires the Department of Veterans Services to publish on its website an annually updated list of state-operated attractions.

6. Budget Amendment Necessary: No.

7. Fiscal Impact Estimates: Indeterminate. Preliminary. See Item 8.

8. Fiscal Implications: As of September 30, 2012, there were 837,051 veterans residing in the Commonwealth. This bill authorizes a veteran presenting a DMV issued veterans ID card at a “state-operated attraction” to receive a 50 percent discount on the admission fee, along with five accompanying persons.

On behalf of the Department of Veteran Services, the Department of Motor Vehicles now issues veteran identification (ID) cards for proof of veteran status to receive discounts from retailers and restaurants. These cards are intended to be a proof of veteran status for those individuals that have no other form of veteran identification, such as a retiree ID card or a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) ID card issued to veterans receiving medical care from the VA. The bill specifies that only a DMV issued card would qualify a veteran for the discounted rate. At this time, nearly 30,000 ID cards have been issued.

The bill does not define “state-operated attraction” although it could mean a state park, museum, or a historical or cultural site. Such attractions would include all Virginia state parks, the Jamestown Settlement, the Yorktown Victory Center, the Frontier Culture Museum, Gunston Hall, the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, the Science Museum of Virginia, the Virginia Aviation Museum, and the Virginia Museum of Natural History. However, a “state-operated attraction” could also be construed as a sporting, musical, or other event sponsored by a Virginia college.

The number of veterans that will ultimately apply for a DMV issued veterans ID card is unknown, as is the number of those veterans who will opt to visit “state-operated attractions” annually.

Although the impact of a discounted admission fee for a veteran and up to five accompanying persons is unable to be measured, anecdotal evidence from several Virginia attractions suggests that the impact may be significant, especially on small agencies. Gunston Hall, with only six full-time employees, believes that at least a third of its adult visitors is a veteran and estimates a loss of up to \$37,500 in annual revenue. The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, where general admission is already free, currently participates in the Blue Star Program, administered through the National Endowment for the Arts and the Department of Defense, which provides free tickets to active military, including Reserves, with up to five members of their families. For the last year, the Fine Arts Museum has provided 783 tickets. They estimate a revenue loss of \$21,500 in tickets by the end of the Chihuly exhibition. While the Blue Star Program is only similar to the state-operated facility discounts that would be available to veterans with this legislation, the Fine Arts Museum’s experience serves to show the impact that such a discount program may have on a smaller state entity.

- 9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected:** Virginia state parks, Jamestown Settlement, Yorktown Victory Center, Frontier Culture Museum, Gunston Hall, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, the Science Museum of Virginia, Virginia Aviation Museum, Virginia Museum of Natural History, Virginia institutions of higher education.

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: No.

11. Other Comments: None.

Date: 1/22/13

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c: Secretary of Veterans Affairs and Homeland Security