

## **BILL ANALYSIS**

H.B. 409  
By: Cortez  
Culture, Recreation & Tourism  
Committee Report (Unamended)

### **BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

The state's first responders have been working tirelessly throughout the COVID-19 pandemic amid the unprecedented stress it has brought to their communities and to their own families. Those concerned about the effects of this sustained stress on certain of these first responders have helpfully noted that the Texas state park system offers unique opportunities for stress relief and relaxation. H.B. 409 seeks to increase those opportunities by providing for waivers for state park entrance fees and certain hunting and fishing license fees for qualifying first responders, specified by the bill, as a small measure of gratitude for the sacrifices many of them have made in service to the state.

### **CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

### **RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

### **ANALYSIS**

H.B. 409 amends the Parks and Wildlife Code to require the Parks and Wildlife Department and the Parks and Wildlife Commission, as applicable, to waive certain fees and requirements for a first responder, as defined by the bill, who qualifies as follows:

- has completed at least 20 years of continuous service as a first responder; or
- has a disability connected to service as a first responder that consists of the loss of the use of a lower extremity or a disability rating of 50 percent or more.

The waived fees and requirements are the following:

- a state park entrance fee; and
- for a qualifying resident:
  - the resident hunting license fee or license requirement;
  - the resident fishing license fee; and
  - the annual combination resident hunting and fishing license fee.

### **EFFECTIVE DATE**

September 1, 2021.