



Photo Credit: National Park Trust

# Every Kid Outdoors Act of 2017

*Supporting America's children to visit our public lands, and get outdoors and active*

## **BACKGROUND**

In 2015, the Every Kid in a Park program was established to encourage children and families to visit America's national parks, forests, and public lands. The program waives entry fees for fourth graders and their families for federally managed lands for one school year. The low-cost and popular program is a public-private partnership that helps boost the local economy and gets kids active, healthy, and outdoors. The program is coordinated by the U.S. Department of the Interior in collaboration with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Forest Service, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Some states park systems have also honored the pass.

## **PROGRAM IMPACTS**

In the program's first year, more than two million fourth graders downloaded the Every Kid in a Park pass from the website. In the program's first two years, nearly \$5 million in private funding has been leveraged to support transportation costs for children from low-income schools to visit a park. At a time when children are spending less and less time outdoors, programs like Every Kid in a Park provide new encouragement and support for children and families. Time outdoors can increase physical activity, improve academic performance, and encourage stewardship.

## **Every Kid Outdoors Act**

The Every Kid Outdoors (EKO) Act of 2017 (H.R. 3186) formally establishes the Every Kid Outdoors program to provide free access to public lands for one school year to all fourth graders and their accompanying family members. The legislation supports collaboration between federal land management agencies, state park agencies, and non-governmental organizations to increase access to the outdoors for children with limited opportunities to visit our parks by providing transportation and other services. The legislation changes the name of the program from Every Kid in a Park to Every Kid Outdoors to be more inclusive of all of America's public lands, waters, and shores. The EKO Act passed in the House of Representatives with overwhelming bipartisan support and was recently passed out of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) scored the bill at zero, making it fiscally responsible legislation.



Nicole, Every Kid in a Park pass holder



Natalia, Every Kid in a Park program alumna

The EKO Act is supported by members of the Outdoors Alliance for Kids (OAK), including the Alliance for Childhood, American Alpine Club, American Heart Association, American Hiking Society, Boys & Girls Club, Children & Nature Network, Conservation Legacy, Girl Scouts of the USA, National Park Trust, National Parks Conservation Association, National Recreation and Park Association, National Wildlife Federation, North American Association for Environmental Education, Outdoor Afro, Outdoor Industry Association, Outdoors Empowered Network, REI, Safe Routes to School National Partnership, Seed Your Future, Sierra Club, The Corps Network, SOS Outreach, The North Face, The Wilderness Society, Trust for Public Land, YMCA of the USA, and others.

"...programs such as "Every Kid in a Park" helped drive record visitation [to parks during the Centennial of the National Park Service in 2016]."

-- U.S. Department of the Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke in a prepared statement

**To co-sponsor the EKO Act of 2017, please contact:**

- Senate: Maya Hermann for Senator Martin Heinrich: [maya\\_hermann@heinrich.senate.gov](mailto:maya_hermann@heinrich.senate.gov)
- House: Becky Cairns for Representative Niki Tsongas: [Becky.Cairns@mail.house.gov](mailto:Becky.Cairns@mail.house.gov)
- Original co-sponsors of the EKO Act include Senators Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Martin Heinrich (D-NM) and Representatives Niki Tsongas (D-MA), Scott Tipton (R-CO), Diana DeGette (D-CO), and Elise Stefanik (R-NY).

For more information about the EKO Act or OAK, please contact:

- Jackie Ostfeld, Chair, Outdoors Alliance for Kids: [contact@outdoorsallianceforkids.org](mailto:contact@outdoorsallianceforkids.org)



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