

ASA Leadership Responds to Interior Secretary Blaming Elderly for National Park Fee Increases

The American Society on Aging's (ASA) Board Chair Bob Blancato, Chair-Elect Karyne Jones, and CEO Bob Stein today condemned remarks offered by Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke during testimony to the Senate Energy and National Resources Committee on Tuesday.

As [reported in The Hill](#), Zinke said, "When you give discounted or free passes to elderly, fourth graders, veterans, disabled, and you do it by the carload, there's not a whole lot of people who actually pay at our front door. So, we're looking at ways to make sure we have more revenue in the front door of our parks themselves."

ASA leaders responded by saying, "On behalf of the older and disabled Americans and veterans in our membership, we take offense at the comments of the Interior Secretary about all of these groups not continuing to enjoy free access to national parks. It is especially disingenuous coming from a Cabinet Secretary who, according to published reports, spent almost \$140,000 in taxpayer funds to fix doors leading into his office. This proposal to impose these new fees should be shown the door."

ASA will continue to support policies that provide preferential access to public resources for older Americans, youth, the disabled and the veteran community.