



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN February 5, 2009

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House Bill 1116 – An Act Requiring Criminal History Record Checks for Youth Camp Employees and Volunteers

The Department of Public Health provides the following information with regard to House Bill 1116.

This bill requires:

- In order for the camp to be eligible for an initial or renewal license, all employees and volunteers of the camp shall submit to criminal history records checks.
- That the costs for performing the records checks be absorbed by the camp.

This bill does not specifically indicate who is responsible for conducting the review and necessary follow-up of background check results that indicate a criminal history.

Facts regarding youth camp licensing and background checks

- In 2008, DPH licensed 482 youth camps that employed approximately 15,000 staff throughout the year. At a cost of \$19.42 per background check, approximately \$291,300 in funding would need to be accounted for.
- In order for the Department to process the background checks on all youth camp employees **significant resources** would be needed for additional staffing.
- Federal law prohibits the release of national criminal history results to outside entities, which complicates the review and notification process.

Additional information regarding Youth Camps

- Each year, many camps hire itinerant employees and volunteers (eg: college students or those that live outside the state or country) that may appear in Connecticut just days prior to the start of camp.
- Background checks need **3-4 weeks** for process plus additional response time for follow up on results that indicate criminal history.

As currently drafted, this bill requires both national and state criminal background checks to be conducted.

Thank you for your consideration of the Department's information on this bill.

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