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Good Morning Chairmen McDonald and Lawlor, Ranking Members Kissel and O'Neill and Members of the Judiciary Committee. I am here today to testify in support of **Raised Bill Number 1116: An Act Requiring Criminal History Records Checks for Youth Camp Employees and Volunteers.**

This bill incorporates an important concept that is also included in House Bill 5199: An Act Concerning Criminal History Records Check of Youth Camp Employees and Volunteers, which is to require each youth camp licensed in Connecticut to perform state and national criminal history record checks for camp employees and volunteers. House Bill 5199 was favorably reported out of the Select Committee on Children and has been referred to the Public Health Committee.

One of our top priorities and responsibilities as legislators is to protect our children from persons seeking to harm them. We have many state laws in Connecticut which require background checks for persons working in schools. However, we do not have similar laws pertaining to youth camps. Raised Bill Number 1116 would close this loophole. The concept is simple. Require persons who work at youth camps to submit to criminal records checks.

During this session we are particularly mindful of state budgetary concerns. Therefore, this bill would require the youth camps to cover the cost of these background checks. I don't like putting added burdens on Connecticut businesses but I would hope they also would share the desire of only having the best people working at their camps taking care of our children. Fortunately, some camps, such as those that are part of the American Camp Association, already conduct such background checks. According to the American Camp Association's website, 45 camps in Connecticut are associated with them. This bill would just close the loop, making sure all of Connecticut's camps licensed by the Department of Public Health that are not currently conducting background checks begin to do so in the future.

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I urge the Judiciary Committee to pass Raised Bill Number 1116 to require criminal history records checks for youth camp staff. Please allow the full General Assembly the opportunity to debate this issue and to pass legislation to protect the children of the state of Connecticut.

Thank you.