



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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

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#### **House Bill 5199 - An Act Concerning Criminal History Records Check of Youth Camp Employees and Volunteers**

#### **House Bill 5146 - An Act Concerning Criminal Background Checks of Camp Employees Who Transport Children With Special Health Care Needs**

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The Department of Public Health provides the following information with regard to House Bills 5199 and 5146.

These bills **require**:

- All employees and volunteers of licensed youth camps to submit to criminal history records checks
- That the costs for performing the records check be shared equally by the prospective employee and the camp.

The bills do 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, HB 5199 requires national background checks of staff to be conducted and HB 5146 requires state criminal background checks.

Phone:

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



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