

February 5, 2009

HB 5199 – An act concerning criminal background checks for employees and volunteers at DPH licensed camps.

1.) HB 5199 continues to support the preferential treatment that municipal camps receive by not requiring employees and volunteers of municipal camps to conduct background checks.

2.)if it is a genuine effort to protect the safety and well-being of our youth, should there be language to extend the requirement for a record check to independent contractors who work on site? Some of us use individuals from social service agencies such as Community Systems. These individuals are present on site longer each day than most volunteers but are classified as independent contractors and thus will be exempt from the requirements of this bill. It is also common to have contractors on site to perform routine tasks such as repair the broken down refrigeration unit or perform maintenance on the communication system, etc.

There is a distinction between direct service contract personnel and others. The guidance/interpretation provided by the American Camping Association is as follows:

“Contracted” staff working in a typical staff role having contact with campers, such as food service, housekeeping, maintenance personnel, or specialized program leaders, must be screened. Guest-program specialists who provide leadership in a limited area and are never with campers in an unsupervised situation would not be subject to screening. American Camping Association Accreditation Standards; Human Resources; HR-4 Staff Screening.

The inclusion of “contractors” in the language of HB 5199 would not be excessively burdensome provided that a similar interpretation was a given. This is perhaps an area in which the Youth Camp Advisory Board can play a role.

3.) The American Camping Association Standard HR-4A requires that, “All camp staff including paid, volunteers and *contracted*”, have a check of the National Sex Offender Public Registry, or for residents of states not participating in the National Sex Offender database, a check of the sexual offender registry of any state in which the applicant resides. Is the generic language of this bill, “national criminal history”, meant to include sexual offender registries or just criminal background checks?

4.)while the bill doesn't contain language prohibiting the camp from paying 100% of the cost of the background check, it does contain the somewhat disingenuous statement that the cost can be shared equally between the prospective employee/volunteer and the camp. Lets all agree that this cost is the exclusive burden of the camp.

The intent of the bill is laudable and I am in support of this effort to enhance the safety of the children of CT.

Kristin Judd

31 Pine Street, Torrington, CT 06790 815-575-2470