



YMCA

We build strong kids,
strong families, strong communities.

Testimony of Frank Sumpter, President & CEO, YMCA of Northern Middlesex County
Representative for the Connecticut Alliance of YMCAs
Before the Legislature's Committee on Public Health
Monday, March 1, 2010
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, Connecticut

YMCAs across Connecticut are the largest provider of Before and After School Childcare programs, primarily sited in public elementary schools. YMCAs operate all of these programs under the licensure of the Department of Public Health. We strongly support uniform, consistent and understandable regulation as a method to insure quality programs and safe conditions for children. We have worked with the Department of Public Health leadership to improve our personnel's understanding of the regulations and to reduce incidents of non compliance.

The collaboration between the YMCAs and the schools derives multiple benefits including providing child care to families in their local neighborhoods in facilities constructed for school age children. The current regulations, as they relate to facility requirements, create conflict with our schools and additional costs for our programs. Schools which provide safe environments for students during the school day are deemed unsafe by DPH regulations for the same students in the before school and after school hours. Examples include:

- Lighting that is not bright enough for studying;
- Fencing that is not high enough for enclosing playgrounds;
- Water that is not hot enough to wash hands;
- Uncovered garbage receptacles in bathrooms;
- Separate and additional testing for environmental hazards

Remedying these conditions results in several undesirable consequences including:

- Diversion of resources away from program components (salaries, supplies, etc) to facility renovations;
- Limiting or withdrawing service to communities served by older school buildings, often in urban and low income neighborhoods;
- Transporting children away from their local neighborhood to other locations increasing both safety risks and costs;
- Conversion of existing sites from licensed programs to school or municipal sponsored programs exempt from all regulations.

For these reasons Connecticut YMCAs support Raised Bill 5306. We are not asking to be relieved from regulation but rather to address a specific inconsistency in the manner in which children attend activities in public elementary schools.

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