



**John L. Cattelan**  
**Executive Director, Connecticut Alliance of YMCAs**  
**H.B. 6417 ACT REQUIRING BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR CERTAIN EMPLOYEES OF**  
**YOUTH CAMPS**  
**Committee on Children**  
**February 18, 2021**

Representative Linehan, Senator Anwar and members of the Committee on Children, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

My name is John Cattelan and I am here today on behalf of the Connecticut Alliance of YMCAs. The Alliance represents 21 YMCAs across the state of Connecticut. While we support the concept of H.B. 6417, An Act Requiring Background Checks for Certain Employees of Youth Camps, we do have some concerns.

According to the feedback I have received from many of YMCA child care centers, it is currently taking four to eight weeks to conduct a background check. First of all, if a background check is completed in eight weeks, camp is completed for the summer. Therefore, the results would be received once the camp counselors have returned to school. In addition, there should also be legislative language that will allow camp staff to work while the background check is being conducted. Most of our counselors arrive in late June and depart in late August. That is only two months. Please note that Y camps already do everything required of a background check with the exception of the fingerprinting.

The bill would also require our camps to conduct background checks for the international camp counselors. Our Ys contract with a third-party vendors. These companies provide information for potential counselors by searching a national sex offender list, a criminal conviction search and Social Security trace (the SSN can only be used if a counselor has previously worked in the United States).

Our Ys then contract with another third party vendor who interview and hire the staff. During this process they are personally interviewed and must provide references. The third-party company then works with each potential counselor to begin the process of having their embassy issue a J-1 Visa. The counselors need to provide the background check information listed above in order to receive a visa at the embassy.

During the course of the summer, our 5 residential camps employ between 150 counselors from international countries. Our Ys will be required spend over \$13,000 for a background check that will yield no results.

Finally, I would like to share with the members of this committee that the provision is going to cost our Y residential and day camps over \$250,000 (\$88.25 for each background check). The cost will result in many children receiving less financial aid to attend camp.