



OFFICE OF THE FIRST SELECTMAN

COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN

February 6th, 2023

Good afternoon, my name is Michael R. Criss, I am the First Selectman for the Town of Harwinton and I am submitting testimony regarding H.B. 6574 "An Act Concerning Municipal Youth Camps".

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Thank you for the opportunity to comment and submit testimony on proposed H.B. 6574 "An Act Concerning Municipal Youth Camps." The Town of Harwinton is against H.B. 6574 because it violates the programs that municipalities have had put in place for years which is providing an affordable alternative to expensive commercially run day camps for low-income families. H.B. 6574 specifies that municipalities need to have a license to run youth camps from the office of Early Childhood. Although this bill may be well intended, it will impose significant cost and staffing requirements on town sponsored youth programs thereby making it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for towns to continue to provide the sustainable summer programming that we currently provide at little to no cost for our residents.

The town of Harwinton, like many municipalities throughout the state, has run summer youth camps and programs for decades with no problems. This legislation is designed to do nothing more than to circumvent and isolate activities for low-income families and take away the municipalities ability to provide these services.

In close we ask that the Committee vote against adopting bill H.B. 6574 for the benefit of many low-income families and allow municipalities to address and accommodate the specific needs of the community. The state cannot have a one-size-fits-all approach. If there is an issue with a certain municipality, then that municipality should be addressed. The state should not attempt to change the landscape of how municipalities serve their residents.

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony in opposition of H.B. 6574 on behalf of the Town of Harwinton. If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Thank you.,

Michael R. Criss
First Selectman, Town Harwinton
Vice Chair, Northwest Council of Governments
Legislative Chair, Northwest Council of Governments

TOWN OF HARWINTON

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General Assembly

January Session, 2023

Raised Bill No. 6574

LCO No. 3279



Referred to Committee on COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN

Introduced by:
(KID)

AN ACT CONCERNING MUNICIPAL YOUTH CAMPS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 19a-420 of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2023*):

3 As used in this chapter:

4 (1) "Youth camp" means any regularly scheduled program or
5 organized group activity advertised as a camp or operated only during
6 school vacations or on weekends by a person, partnership, corporation,
7 association, the state or a municipal agency or department for
8 recreational or educational purposes and accommodating for profit or
9 under philanthropic or charitable auspices five or more children, who
10 are at least three years of age and under sixteen years of age, who are
11 (A) not bona fide personal guests in the private home of an individual,
12 and (B) living apart from their relatives, parents or legal guardian, for a
13 period of three days or more per week or portions of three or more days
14 per week, provided any such relative, parent or guardian who is an
15 employee of such camp shall not be considered to be in the position of

16 loco parentis to such employee's child for the purposes of this chapter,
17 but does not include (i) classroom-based summer instructional
18 programs operated by any person, provided no activities that may pose
19 a health risk or hazard to participating children are conducted at such
20 programs, (ii) public schools, or private schools in compliance with
21 section 10-188 and approved by the State Board of Education or
22 accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the State Board of
23 Education, which operate a summer educational program, (iii) licensed
24 child care centers, or (iv) drop-in programs for children who are at least
25 six years of age administered by a nationally chartered boys' and girls'
26 club;

27 (2) "Resident camp" means any youth camp which is established,
28 conducted or maintained on any parcel or parcels of land on which there
29 are located dwelling units or buildings intended to accommodate five
30 or more children who are at least three years of age and under sixteen
31 years of age for at least seventy-two consecutive hours and in which the
32 campers attending such camps eat and sleep;

33 (3) "Day camp" means any youth camp which is established,
34 conducted or maintained on any parcel or parcels of land on which there
35 are located dwelling units or buildings intended to accommodate five
36 or more children who are at least three years of age and under sixteen
37 years of age during daylight hours for at least three days a week with
38 the campers eating and sleeping at home, except for one meal per day,
39 but does not include programs operated by a municipal agency or
40 department;

41 (4) "Person" means the state or any municipal agency or department,
42 individual, partnership, association, organization, limited liability
43 company or corporation;

44 (5) "Commissioner" means the Commissioner of Early Childhood;
45 and

46 (6) "Office" means the Office of Early Childhood.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

Section 1	October 1, 2023	19a-420
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Statement of Purpose:

To specify that certain programs and activities advertised or operated by municipal departments shall be licensed as youth camps by the Office of Early Childhood.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]