



Senate

General Assembly

File No. 136

February Session, 2024

Substitute Senate Bill No. 215

Senate, March 27, 2024

The Committee on Children reported through SEN. MAHER, C. of the 26th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING YOUTH CAMPS.

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

1 Section 1. Section 19a-426 of the general statutes is repealed and the
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2024*):

3 The office shall inspect or cause to be inspected the facilities to be
4 operated by an applicant for an original license before the license shall
5 be granted, and again not later than seventy-two hours after the licensee
6 commences operations. The office shall annually thereafter inspect or
7 cause to be inspected the facilities of all licensees. In conducting such
8 inspections, the office shall give (1) priority to applicants for an original
9 license and those licensees that operate a youth camp for a single week,
10 provided an inspection of a single-week youth camp shall be conducted
11 not later than forty-eight hours after the commencement of operations
12 of such youth camp in a given year, and (2) less priority to those
13 licensees (A) that have received national accreditation from the
14 American Camp Association or under the Boy Scouts of America's
15 National Camp Accreditation Program, or (B) against which there were

16 no complaints or violations filed during the previous five years. No
17 annual inspection shall be required under this section in the case of
18 facilities of a licensee located in any dormitory, classroom or other
19 building or any athletic facility owned and maintained by any college
20 or university, provided a timely safety inspection of such building or
21 facility, satisfactory to the office, is conducted by or on behalf of such
22 college or university.

23 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2024*) (a) There is established a Youth
24 Camp Safety Advisory Council within the Office of Early Childhood.
25 The council shall provide advice to the Commissioner of Early
26 Childhood on matters relating to safety issues at youth camps.

27 (b) The council shall consist of the following members:

28 (1) A representative of the Connecticut Camping Association
29 appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives;

30 (2) A representative of the Connecticut Recreation and Parks
31 Association appointed by the president pro tempore of the Senate;

32 (3) A representative of a nonprofit youth service organization with a
33 camping program in the state appointed by the majority leader of the
34 House of Representatives;

35 (4) A representative of a nonprofit youth service organization with a
36 camping program in the state appointed by the majority leader of the
37 Senate;

38 (5) A representative of a day camp appointed by the minority leader
39 of the House of Representatives;

40 (6) A representative of a resident camp appointed by the minority
41 leader of the Senate;

42 (7) A representative of a day camp appointed by the House
43 chairperson of the joint standing committee of the General Assembly
44 having cognizance of matters relating to children;

45 (8) A representative of a resident camp appointed by the Senate
46 chairperson of the joint standing committee of the General Assembly
47 having cognizance of matters relating to children;

48 (9) A representative of a sports camp appointed by the Governor;

49 (10) A representative of an independent school camp appointed by
50 the Governor;

51 (11) A representative of a university that hosts or conducts a summer
52 camp appointed by the Commissioner of Early Childhood; and

53 (12) Any additional member appointed by the commissioner to fill
54 the needs of the council based on expertise in the field.

55 (c) All appointments to the council, pursuant to subsection (b) of this
56 section, shall be made not later than September 1, 2024. Any vacancy
57 shall be filled by the appointing authority. Members shall serve three-
58 year terms.

59 (d) The Commissioner of Early Childhood shall schedule the first
60 meeting of the council, which shall be held not later than September 15,
61 2024. The members of the council shall elect the chairpersons of the
62 council from among the members of the council at the first meeting of
63 the council.

64 (e) The council shall elect, annually, its own chairperson and other
65 officers as deemed necessary. The council shall meet at least once during
66 each calendar quarter and at such other times as the chairperson deems
67 necessary or upon the request of a majority of members. The
68 Commissioner of Early Childhood shall meet at least annually with the
69 council. Any member who fails to attend fifty per cent of all meetings
70 held during any calendar year shall be deemed to have resigned from
71 the council. Members of the council shall serve without compensation.
72 The Office of Early Childhood shall provide administrative assistance to
73 facilitate the activity of the council.

74 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2024*) On and after July 1, 2024, any (1)

75 fatality that occurs at an unlicensed youth camp or results from camping
76 activities, or (2) injury that occurs at an unlicensed youth camp or results
77 from camping activities and results in a camper being admitted to a
78 hospital or diagnosed with a fracture, concussion or second or third
79 degree burn shall be reported to the Office of Early Childhood, in
80 writing, on a form developed and made available by the office, not later
81 than the next business day.

82 Sec. 4. Subsection (e) of section 19a-421 of the general statutes is
83 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1,*
84 *2024*):

85 (e) The Commissioner of Early Childhood shall have the discretion to
86 refuse to license under sections 19a-420 to 19a-429, inclusive, a person
87 to establish, conduct or maintain a youth camp, as described in section
88 19a-420, or to suspend or revoke the license or take any other action set
89 forth in any regulation adopted pursuant to section 19a-428 if, the
90 person who establishes, conducts or maintains such youth camp or a
91 person employed therein in a position connected with the provision of
92 care to a child or involving unsupervised access to a child, has (1) been
93 convicted in this state or any other state of (A) a felony as defined in
94 section 53a-25 involving the use, attempted use or threatened use of
95 physical force against another person, [of] (B) cruelty to persons under
96 section 53-20, (C) injury or risk of injury to or impairing morals of
97 children under section 53-21, (D) abandonment of children under the
98 age of six years under section 53-23, [or] (E) any felony where the victim
99 of the felony is a child under eighteen years of age, or [of] (F) a violation
100 of section 53a-70b of the general statutes, revision of 1958, revised to
101 January 1, 2019, 53a-70, 53a-70a, 53a-71, 53a-72a, 53a-72b or 53a-73a, [or
102 has] (2) a criminal record in this state or any other state that the
103 commissioner reasonably believes renders the person unsuitable to
104 establish, conduct or maintain or be employed by a youth camp, or (3)
105 held a license to establish, conduct or maintain a youth camp in another
106 state that was revoked by such state's licensing authority. However, no
107 refusal of a license shall be rendered except in accordance with the
108 provisions of sections 46a-79 to 46a-81, inclusive.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2024</i>	19a-426
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2024</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2024</i>	New section
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2024</i>	19a-421(e)

KID *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 25 \$	FY 26 \$
Office of Early Childhood	GF - Potential Cost	At least \$13,500	At least \$13,500

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill may result in a cost to the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) associated with reporting requirements for unlicensed summer youth camps established by the bill.

The bill requires unlicensed youth camps to report to OEC regarding fatalities and injuries resulting in a camper's hospital admission or diagnosis with a fracture, concussion, or second- or third-degree burn. If OEC is required to review and investigate reports by these unlicensed camps, they would incur costs of at least \$13,500 to hire an additional seasonal Environmental Sanitarian 1 position for camp inspections. The number of unlicensed camps is currently unknown.

For context, OEC currently employs 10 Environmental Sanitarian 1 staff to conduct inspections of licensed youth camps. Of those, 8 staff are employed for 12 weeks with an average total salary of \$13,500 per employee. OEC receives approximately 70-80 reports per year of injuries at licensed summer youth camps. OEC staff investigate approximately 10% of the reports based on the nature of the complaint.

The bill makes various other changes that do not result in a fiscal

impact.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to the number of licensed and unlicensed camps within the state.

Sources: Office of Early Childhood Testimony

OLR Bill Analysis**sSB 215*****AN ACT CONCERNING YOUTH CAMPS.*****SUMMARY**

This bill makes various changes affecting the regulation of youth camps, including the following:

1. requiring the Office of Early Childhood (OEC), within 72 hours after the camp operations start, to repeat the facility inspection required under current law for initial youth camp licensure (§ 1);
2. establishing a priority order OEC must follow when inspecting youth camps, giving priority to initial licensure applicants and single-week youth camps (§ 1);
3. authorizing the OEC commissioner to take various disciplinary actions (e.g., license refusal, suspension, or revocation) against a youth camp licensee if the operator or an employee held a youth camp license in another state that was revoked (§ 4);
4. requiring unlicensed youth camps to report to OEC within one business day after certain fatalities or injuries occur at the camp or result from camping activities (§ 3); and
5. establishing a Youth Camp Safety Advisory Council within OEC to advise the commissioner on youth camp safety (§ 2).

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2024

§§ 1 & 4 — OEC YOUTH CAMP LICENSURE***Facility Inspection Frequency***

Current law requires OEC, before issuing an initial youth camp license, to inspect, or cause to be inspected, the camp's facilities. The bill requires OEC to repeat the inspection within 72 hours after the youth

camp starts operating.

Existing law, unchanged by the bill, also requires OEC to annually inspect, or cause to be inspected, all licensees' facilities.

Facility Inspection Priority

When inspecting youth camps, the bill requires OEC to prioritize initial licensure applicants and licensees who operate single-week youth camps. For the latter, the inspections must be done within 48 hours after the youth camp starts operating in a given year.

Conversely, it requires OEC to give less priority to licensees that (1) are nationally accredited by the American Camp Association or the Boy Scouts of America's National Camp Accreditation Program or (2) have no complaints or violations filed against them during the prior five years.

License Refusal, Suspension, or Revocation

The bill authorizes the OEC commissioner to (1) refuse to license a person to establish or maintain a youth camp; (2) suspend or revoke a license; or (3) take any other action authorized under regulation if a person who establishes, conducts, or maintains a youth camp or an employee in a position connected with providing care to a child or involving unsupervised access to a child held a youth camp license in another state that was revoked by that state's licensing authority.

Existing law already authorizes the commissioner to take such action if a person or employee:

1. has been convicted of certain crimes in any state (e.g., injury or risk of injury to or impairing the morals of children) or
2. has a criminal record that the commissioner reasonably believes makes the person unsuitable to establish, conduct, maintain, or be employed by a youth camp.

By law, the commissioner's refusal of a license must be in accordance with the human rights and opportunities statutes prohibiting

discrimination based on erased criminal history record information.

§ 3 — UNLICENSED YOUTH CAMPS' REQUIRED REPORTING TO OEC

The bill requires unlicensed youth camps to report to OEC the following events that occur at the camp or result from camping activities:

1. fatalities or
2. injuries resulting in a camper's hospital admission or diagnosis with a fracture, concussion, or second- or third-degree burn.

Under the bill, unlicensed camps must report the events in writing by the next business day, using a form OEC develops and provides.

§ 2 — YOUTH CAMP SAFETY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Membership

The bill establishes a Youth Camp Safety Advisory Council within OEC to advise the commissioner on youth camp safety. At a minimum, the council's membership includes the following 11 appointees who serve three-year terms without compensation:

1. a Connecticut Camping Association representative appointed by the House speaker;
2. a Connecticut Recreation and Parks Association representative, appointed by the Senate president pro tempore;
3. two representatives of Connecticut nonprofit youth service organizations with a camping program, appointed one each by the House and Senate majority leaders;
4. two representatives of day camps, appointed one each by the House minority leader and Children's Committee House chairperson;
5. two representatives of resident camps, appointed one each by the

- Senate minority leader and Children’s Committee Senate chairperson;
6. a sports camp representative and an independent school camp representative, both appointed by the governor; and
 7. a representative of a university that hosts or conducts a summer camp, appointed by the OEC commissioner.

Under the bill, appointing authorities must make their appointments by September 1, 2024, and fill any vacancy. The commissioner may appoint any additional members based on their expertise and the council’s needs.

Meetings and Governance

The bill requires the OEC commissioner to schedule and hold the council’s first meeting by September 15, 2024. At the first meeting, and annually after that, the members must elect the council’s chairpersons from among the members. The council may also elect other officers it deems necessary.

The council must meet at least quarterly and when the chairperson deems it necessary or majority of members request it. The OEC commissioner must meet at least annually with the council.

Under the bill, any member who fails to attend 50% of all meetings held during any calendar year must be deemed to have resigned from the council.

The bill requires OEC to provide administrative assistance to facilitate the council’s activities.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Committee on Children

Joint Favorable Substitute
 Yea 15 Nay 3 (03/12/2024)