



**Substitute Senate Bill No. 215**

**Public Act No. 24-49**

**AN ACT CONCERNING YOUTH CAMPS.**

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

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 Section 19a-426 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2024*):

The office shall inspect or cause to be inspected the facilities to be operated by an applicant for an original license before the license shall be granted, and again (1) not later than seventy-two hours after the licensee commences operations, and (2) if the office approves a corrective action plan for the licensee, not later than seventy-two hours after such approval, and every week thereafter until the office has determined that such licensee is fully compliant with the provisions of such corrective action plan. The office shall annually thereafter inspect or cause to be inspected the facilities of all licensees. In conducting such inspections, the office shall give (A) priority to applicants for an original license and those licensees that operate a youth camp for a single week, provided an inspection of a single-week youth camp shall be conducted not later than forty-eight hours after the commencement of operations of such youth camp in a given year, and (B) less priority to those licensees (i) that have received national accreditation from the American Camp Association or under the Boy Scouts of America's National Camp Accreditation Program, or (ii) against which there were no complaints

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(7) A representative of a day camp appointed by the House chairperson of the joint standing committee of the General Assembly

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having cognizance of matters relating to children;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(e) The council shall elect, annually, its own chairperson and other officers as deemed necessary. The council shall meet at least once during each calendar quarter and at such other times as the chairperson deems necessary or upon the request of a majority of members. The Commissioner of Early Childhood shall meet at least annually with the council. Any member who fails to attend fifty per cent of all meetings held during any calendar year shall be deemed to have resigned from

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the council. Members of the council shall serve without compensation. The Office of Early Childhood shall provide administrative assistance to facilitate the activity of the council.

Sec. 3. Subsection (e) of section 19a-421 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2024*):

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