



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

JESSE JAMES

Chairman Kapenga and Committee Members,

Thank you for hearing Senate Bill 328 today. Senate Bill 328 is part of a package of bills reforming licensure and requirements for overnight camps. These camps are currently regulated as restaurants, educational centers, clinics and child care centers, adding layers of redundant and duplicative regulations they must meet. This package seeks to address this over-regulation and modernize the state's approach, ensuring their continued success.

SB 328, as amended, would allow the Department of Agriculture and Trade and Consumer Protection or a local health department, when issuing a renewal license to a camp, to waive any applicable inspection requirement for two out of every three license years if the camp has already been accredited by the American Camp Association (ACA). ACA requirements are national standards the camps must uphold. In many cases, the camp inspections, by the ACA and by the state, are duplicative and burdensome.

The intent of this bill is to lower the burden on camps of paying for a costly inspection year after year while still maintaining the high quality of the camp. When a camp must undergo a costly inspection that cost is then put on to the parents who send their children to camp. It can make camps unaffordable for parents because of unnecessary regulations. This bill will not lower standards for the health or well-being of a camp but will keep the access of the camp open to people of all socio-economic backgrounds. The ACA provides rigorous, uniform safety and quality standards, and this bill will ease the administrative burden on camp owners as well at the state.

I would like to thank my co-author, Senator Bernier, for her partnership on this and thank you for your time.

STATE SENATOR KATHY BERNIER
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From: Senator Kathy Bernier
To: Senate Committee on Public Benefits, Licensing and State-Federal Relations
Re: Testimony on Senate Bill 328
Relating to: Inspections of recreational and educational camps
Date: October 24, 2019

Thank you Chairman Kapenga for allowing me to testify on Senate Bill 328. I am grateful for the opportunity to work with Representative James on this legislation for Wisconsin recreational and educational camps.

Overnight recreational and educational summer camps throughout Wisconsin allow young people to experience the great outdoors of the state while also teaching life skills and creating lifelong friends. Furthermore, they bring in millions of dollars in rural tourism revenue and employ hundreds of people.

These camps are subject to annual inspections by the American Camp Association (ACA). In addition, the camps also have to obtain rigorous licensing through the state in order to be fully accredited for operation. The requirements placed by the ACA are as strict as or stricter than the state's requirements leading to camps having to go through a repetitive process of obtaining both the ACA and state's approval.

This bill would allow camps to avoid duplicative processes by waiving licensing inspections for two out of three years if camps have been accredited by the ACA. This would ease the administrative work and costs on these camps and provide a simpler renewal process for them and the state.

I ask that you please vote for Senate Bill 328 to ease the administrative burden and costs on these camps and ensure that these Wisconsin institutions can continue to provide exceptional experiences and skills to children well into the future.

Gabe Chernov, Owner, Director of Birch Trail
Senate Committee on Public Benefits, Licensing and State-Federal Relations
Testimony on Senate Bill 328
Relating to: Inspections of recreational and educational camps
October 24, 2019

Thank you for the opportunity to speak. My name is Gabe Chernov and I am the owner and director of Birch Trail, a summer camp for children in Minong, WI. We serve campers from across the United States and have a large economic impact on our rural community. Camps like ours contribute greatly to the Northwood's economy through job creation, real estate taxes, food budget, services and goods from vendors, insurance, parents visiting weekend (hotels, meals and shopping) and much more.

The benefits of summer camp for our campers include Social Skills Development such as leadership, communication and participation, Character Building such as responsibility and resilience and Community Living such as citizenship and trustworthiness. Our staff build skills for their careers. They learn flexibility and adaptability, as they work with a variety of people ranging from children to camp directors. They show initiative and problem-solving when any unexpected circumstances arise. They are exposed to a multi-cultural community of both campers and counselors and understand what it means to build a caring, supportive community. They demonstrate accountability as they work to keep children safe and happy. But more than all of this, they gain a sense of self-fulfillment when they see their campers try new activities, reach their goals, and grow in confidence.

The campers who attend our camps are with us for at most 8 weeks, and as short as 1 week. We go through an in depth inspection process with the American Camping Association in addition to the state inspection. The inspectors who come to our camps have typically been visiting us for years and are familiar with our programs and whether we run a safe operation. The state inspection is just one of many inspections we have in our short operating season. Having multiple redundant inspections in an eight week operating season takes our attention away from caring for our campers. We are always happy to comply with any regulations that keep our camp community safe, and we feel that making this change to an optional inspection per the view of the department allows the safety standards to be met, while allowing us to devote our time to the safety of our community.

I would be happy to address any questions, thank you for your time,

Gabe Chernov

Midwest Association of Camps Summer Camp Recreational Reform Package

Midwest Association of Camps (MAIC) represents hundreds of camps across Wisconsin that serve thousands of kids from around the world every summer. These camps bring in millions in tourist dollars and showcases rural Wisconsin. A recreational and educational camp is **defined** as a premise, including temporary and permanent structures, that is operated as an overnight living quarters where both food and lodging or facilities for food and lodging are provided for children or adults or both children and adults for a planned program.

CURRENT STATUS:

Camps in Wisconsin typically only operate 8 out of 52 weeks a year. Wisconsin's building codes mostly contain provisions for dwellings and commercial buildings. The codes aren't nimble enough to adjust to the limited use of camps. Their buildings have unique and limited uses and populations.

Physicians and nurses that volunteer in camps are subject to onerous regulations and applications that take more time to obtain than the length that they volunteer. Finding physicians and nurses to go through the regulatory process is difficult.

Proposed Legislation:

A bipartisan package of bills to realign Wisconsin camp regulation with best practices around the country.

SB 399/AB 428 – Doctors at Camps (Edming/Petrowski) Allows licensed physicians from other states to practice limited medicine as a volunteer at a camp for up to 90 days with an expedited application process.

SB 410/AB 458 – Nurses at Camp (Petrowski/Magnafici) Allows nurses from other states to practice limited medicine as a volunteer at a camp for up to 90 days with an expedited application process.

SB 396/ AB 435 – Camp Regulation (Felzkowski/Tiffany) Sets building standards for recreational and educational camps, through the rule-making process at the Department of Safety and Professional Services

SB 394/ AB 437 – Camp Health Records (Oldenburg/Tiffany) Electronic health records at recreational and educational camps

SB328/ AB353 –Camp Inspections (James/Bernier) Allow DATCP to waive annual inspections for not more than two out of every three years at their discretion if they feel the camp has exhibited effective managerial control of public health hazards.

TALKING POINTS:

- Legislation would only apply to physicians/nurses at camps that are licenses as “recreational and educational camps”.
- Physicians and nurses have to be licensed in another state and verified by DSPS
- Camps are liable for any civil action and physicians are covered under medical malpractice.
- No objections from hospitals, or the Medical College of Wisconsin.
- Building codes created to address these unique needs would be created with industry experts at the table.

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