

Committee on Children JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: SB-157 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING MUNICIPAL CAMP SAFETY.

Vote Date: 2/24/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/17/2026

File No.:

***Disclaimer:** The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Committee on Children

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill seeks to establish municipal youth camp leaders as mandated reporters. Additionally, it requires the Office of Early Childhood to submit a report on municipal camps that includes a list of all municipal camps in the state along with the details of their operational structure and the children attending them. Through these measures, the bill seeks to address safety concerns with the administration of municipal camps and attempts to remedy issues surrounding data collection and staff policies to allow for greater efficiency and transparency in municipal camps.

SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE (IF APPLICABLE):

LCO 1795: This substitute changes “conjunction” to “consultation” in line 56 due to the Parks and Recreation Department’s request to remove state mandates of participation by private entities in the study.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Office of the Child Advocate, The Acting Child Advocate Christina Ghio:

The Office of the Child Advocate appreciates the Committee’s move to improve safety for children in municipal camps, as the bill encourages the release of additional data relevant to youth camps, operations, and demographics. More effort is requested to address the exemptions of OEC licensures for youth camps. The suggestions serve to bring full transparency to the workplace by broadening mandated reporter titles to all staff, extending background checks for all who work in municipal childcare settings and youth camps, and

redefining entities to allow for providing notice of pertinent reports and results of investigations.

Office of Early Childhood, Interim Commissioner Elena Trueworthy:

The Office of Early Childhood supports the addition of language referencing youth camps to reflect meaning that it is licensed or operated by a municipal agency. They support Section 2, which requires that OEC, in consultation with various state-wide associations, submit additional data reporting to the Committee on Children. She lists future considerations OEC will take on as they work to distribute statewide surveys and inform their reporting.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

The public showed general support as they emphasized the importance of strengthening safety protections for children attending municipal camps in Connecticut. The speakers noted that, unlike licensed private camps, many municipal camps are not subject to the same level of regulation and oversight, which can create gaps in child protection standards. The supporters of the bill expressed agreement regarding expanding mandated reporter requirements to include certain municipal camp staff and suggested that background checks for camp employees could serve as an additional safeguard.

Shannon Lane

Josh Wojtyna, Program Team Associate - Connecticut Camping Association

Randy Collins

The Connecticut Recreation and Parks Association (CRPA), Executive Director Valerie Stolfi Collins: Ms. Collins states that municipal camps are happy to comply with the component regarding mandated reporters. The CRPA would also agree to work with OEC on the data collection highlighted in Section 2. However, she has some reservations about this section as it does not clearly outline who is responsible for which actions in the report.

Connecticut Council of Small Towns, Legislative Director James Berardino: Mr. Berardino states that the Council is enthusiastic about complying with the mandated reporting and will work with OEC on ensuring the safety of children attending these camps.

Windham-Tolland 4-H Camp, Camp Director Heather Logee: Ms. Logee supports the requirement of all staff over the age of 21 to be mandated reporters, and she would also like to require background checks for all municipal camp staff.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

The speakers raise concerns about expanding state requirements for local camps and express opposition to proposed changes related to municipal youth camps, including requiring certain camp employees to become mandated reporters of suspected child abuse or neglect and directing the state to compile a statewide report on municipal camps. They spoke that mandated reporter laws create legal responsibilities and potential penalties that could add administrative burdens for camp staff and volunteers, which may discourage participation in community-based programs.

Sarah Dzialo
Stacy Malone
Liz Gambacorta, Recreation Supervisor for the Town of Glastonbury

Suffield Community Services, Director Peter Leclerc: Mr. Leclerc shares concerns regarding Section 2 of the bill, which requires OEC to collect detailed operational information. He opposes the amount of information set to be collected, states that the new standards will create administrative burdens on municipalities, and predicts legislative intent will create implications for future policy.

Reported by: Mia Giglietti, Zachary Robinson, Frederica Dampson, and Alexandria Silva **Date: 3/6/2026**