

Nichols, Jackson

From: Reed Rathgeber <reed@wohelo.com>
Sent: Monday, March 4, 2024 9:55 AM
To: HHS
Subject: Support of LD 2230

This message originates from outside the Maine Legislature.

Dear HHS Committee Members:

My name is Reed Rathgeber, and I am the Director of Sebago Wohelo at Wohelo Camps in Raymond, ME. Wohelo is a traditional girls' summer camp that opened in 1907. We aim to create an environment of relaxed friendliness close to nature. We want a simple environment, away from the conveniences and complications of the modern world, where personal growth is a central focus and the campers are getting education through experience.

I'm writing today in support of LD 2230, "An Act to Change Department of Health and Human Service Rules Regarding Youth Camps to Major Substantive Rules.". While I realize a bill asking the Legislature to change the Chapter 208 rule from "routine technical" to "major substantive" is significant, I feel this is the only way to have DHHS withdraw the current rulemaking and meet with youth camps' representatives collaboratively.

For the past two months, Maine youth camps have submitted comments on rulemaking and communicated with our representatives in Augusta. Still, DHHS - specifically the HIP program – will not agree to the historic collaborative approach that has been followed for the past 50 years. The past joint efforts of the department and Maine Youth Camp Association have led to the strongest and most duplicated-to-other-states regulations in the summer camp industry.

Maine youth camps have been cut out from this most recent rulemaking process, which includes an increase of more than 40% critical violations (140 criticals in current rules; 224 criticals in proposed rules), all created without youth camps' input.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this important matter.

Sincerely,
Reed

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Reed Rathgeber
she/her
Director of Sebago Wohelo
Wohelo Camps