



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

# JESSE JAMES

Testimony before Assembly Committee on Rural Development  
Assembly Bill 155  
Tuesday, April 6, 2021

Thank you Chairwoman VanderMeer and committee members for hearing Assembly Bill 155 today. Assembly Bill 155 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.

AB 155, would allow the Department of Agriculture, 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 as 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**  
TWENTY-THIRD SENATE DISTRICT



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**From: Senator Kathy Bernier**  
**To: Assembly Committee on Rural Development**  
**Re: Testimony on Assembly Bill 155**  
**Relating to: Inspections of recreational and educational camps**  
**Date: April 6, 2021**

Thank you Chairwoman VanderMeer for allowing me to testify on Assembly Bill 155. I am grateful for the opportunity to work with Representative James on this legislation for Wisconsin recreational and educational camps. I want to note that last session this bill was unanimously passed by the Assembly but did not have time to make it to the Senate floor.

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 Assembly Bill 155 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.



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# JAMES W. EDMING

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 87<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

## **Testimony in Support of Assembly Bill 159** *Assembly Committee on Rural Development* April 6, 2021

Good morning. I appreciate the opportunity to come before you today and speak in support of Assembly Bill (AB) 159, which is legislation that will make it easier for out-of-state physicians to serve as camp doctors here in Wisconsin. I would like to thank Senator Felzkowski for working with me on this important legislation.

There is nothing quite like a Wisconsin summer. Our many lakes, streams, and forests allow our state to offer some of the best outdoor recreational opportunities in the world and make Wisconsin a great place to spend a week or two away at camp. Kids come from all around the world to attend summer camps in Wisconsin. These camps are located in all corners of the state and are an important part of the state and local economy.

Recreational activities carry the risk of injury, and camp activities are no exception. Many summer camps rely on volunteers who give a few weeks of their summer to serve as a camp doctor. Camp doctors ensure the safety of both campers and staff. While the vast majority of injuries treated by a camp doctor are minor (i.e. rashes, twisted ankles), having a doctor on hand provides an extra level of care that should be encouraged.

Many physicians who volunteer as camp doctors are licensed in another state. Current law requires these very capable doctors to obtain a temporary license from the State of Wisconsin, even though they are only volunteering for few weeks. Many of the requirements to receive this temporary licensure are very time-consuming, so camps are finding it harder to find physicians who are willing to go through this lengthy process just to volunteer for a short time. Some camp doctors have said that it is more work to obtain the temporary license than to work at the camp itself.

AB 159 seeks to solve this problem by allowing a physician licensed outside of the Wisconsin to practice at a camp in Wisconsin for up to 90 working days in a year. A physician operating under this exemption would only be permitted to treat campers and staff. Under the bill as drafted, the physician must be licensed in another state or territory of the United States or a foreign country or province where the licensure standards are substantially equivalent to those in Wisconsin to qualify for this exemption. At the request of the Medical Examining Board, we have introduced a simple amendment that narrows this exemption to only the United States and Canada. We have also introduced another simple amendment at the request of DSPS that allows the emergency rules promulgated under this legislation to remain in effect until 2023.

Members of the committee, I ask for your support of this legislation and thank you again for the opportunity to testify before you today.



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# GAE MAGNAFICI

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 28<sup>th</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF AB 166

Good morning Chairwoman VanderMeer, and members of the Committee, and thank you for taking the time to hear my testimony today.

In Wisconsin, we're fortunate to have some of the most pristine summer camps the world has to offer. These overnight camps, operating throughout the state, provide young men and women with invaluable experiences that help them grow mentally, physically, and socially. For many children, summer camps offer the first opportunity to spend time away from a city and be surrounded by nature. As our society continues to become more attached to social media and smart phones, summer camps and the experiences they provide are becoming more important.

As with any outdoor activity, injuries sometimes occur at summer camps. As a former pediatric nurse, I know the quality of care that nurses provide for children, and the peace of mind that parents have knowing that their children are in safe hands. Qualified nurses that wish to provide their valuable services to a summer camp should be able to do so without needing to go through the current time-consuming procedures of temporary licensure in Wisconsin. Overnight summer camps face a myriad of challenges to continue safe and successful operation, and extensive compliance efforts to ensure the safety of their children should not be one of them.



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# GAE MAGNAFICI

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 28<sup>th</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

AB 166 will allow registered nurses in good standing in another state, US territory, or foreign country to practice as a nurse at a summer camp in Wisconsin for up to 90 days per year if the licensure standards in that jurisdiction that the nurse is licensed are equivalent to the requirements of Wisconsin. Registered nurses operating under this exemption would be limited to treating campers and camp staff only. This legislation will help ensure that camps across our state have the resources they need to continue providing this valuable service to Wisconsin families.

I'm proud to be an author of this bill and to support the safe and efficient operation of our state's summer camps.

Thank you again for taking the time to hear my testimony, and I'd be happy to answer any questions.



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# MARY FELZKOWSKI

STATE SENATOR • 12<sup>TH</sup> SENATE DISTRICT

## **Testimony for AB 159 & AB 166**

Senator Mary Felzkowski  
Assembly Committee on Rural Development  
April 6, 2021

Good morning Chair VanderMeer and Committee Members,

In Wisconsin, we're fortunate to have some of the most pristine summer camps a child could hope to attend. These camps, operating throughout the state, provide young men and women with invaluable experiences that help them grow mentally, physically, emotionally and socially. For many children, summer camp offers the first opportunity to spend time away from the city and be surrounded by nature.

In order to be able to function safely, these camps rely on doctors and nurses, oftentimes camp alumni themselves, or parents of a child, volunteering their time and service to treat campers for injuries they may receive. While the vast majority of injuries treated by camp doctors and nurses are minor (rashes, twisted ankles, etc.), having medical staff on hand provides an extra level of care that should be encouraged.

Just like the campers, many of these volunteer doctors and nurses come from all over the nation. Current law requires these fully qualified doctors and nurses receive a temporary license from the state to serve as a camp doctor or nurse even if they are only serving for a short time, sometimes as short as a week. There are many time-consuming requirements for temporary licensure and camps are having a harder and harder time finding physicians and nurses who are willing to go through this lengthy process. Some camp doctors have said that it requires far more time and work to obtain the temporary license than the time and work at the camp itself.

These bills will allow doctors and nurses licensed in another state and in good standing to practice at a Wisconsin summer camp for up to 90 days per year if the licensure standards in that jurisdiction are substantially equivalent to the requirements in Wisconsin. Doctors and nurses operating under this exemption are limited to treating campers and camp staff only.

Both of these bills passed the Assembly last session and made it out of committee in the Senate, only to be timed out due to the pandemic. Both bills have also had their public hearing and executive session in the Senate this session and are heading to the floor. I want to thank my co-authors, Rep. Edming and Rep. Magnafici, for the great efforts they and their staff have put into this package of bills.

Thank you for your consideration.

# Birch Trail Camp for Girls

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Chairperson VanderMeer and members of the committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak. My name is Gabe Chernov and I am the owner and director of Birch Trail Camp, 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 Northwoods economy through job creation, real estate taxes, food budget, services and goods from vendors, insurance, parents visiting weekend items like hotels, meals and shopping and so much more. While a bit biased, camp is always important but this summer more so as kids address learning loss, the loss of social/emotional learning and time spent with their peers from Covid.

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.

I would like to take a moment to address these bills and why they are needed.

## **AB 159**

We (like many camps in Wisconsin) rely on volunteer doctors to work with other medical professionals to help keep our campers & staff healthy and safe. Unfortunately, the current process for camp doctors to become licensed in our state is a barrier for many. With excessive paperwork & testing, the process can often take up to 6 months.

We need this bill because the current law makes it difficult and very time consuming for volunteer doctors to obtain a Wisconsin license. Most of these doctors spend 1 week at camp and our fear is that more doctors will stop volunteering because of the difficulty in obtaining a license.

The safety and care of our campers is our main priority and having an easier path for volunteer doctors to care for our children would help us keep our campers and staff healthy and safe.

## **AB 166**

Similar to the above reasons for volunteer doctors, the excessive red tape our nurses face often causes camps to go without proper health care staff. We would prefer that camps be able to obtain the health care staff that they need so that campers in Wisconsin are able to be as safe as possible. This bill will help ensure the health and safety of campers and staff at Wisconsin camps.

# Birch Trail Camp for Girls

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## AB 155

The campers who attend our camps are with us for at most 8 weeks, and as short as 1 week. We go through a in depth inspection process with the American Camping Association in addition to the state health inspection, fire inspections and water tests. 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 only 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.

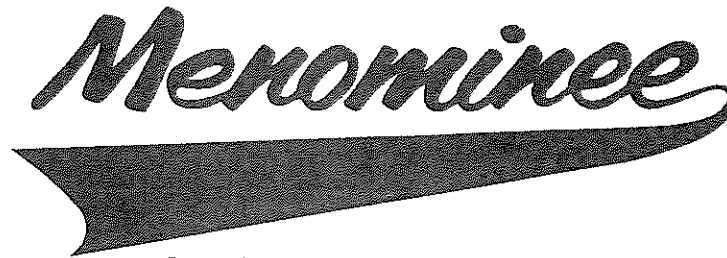
I would like to mention that all of these bills passed unanimously in the Senate committee last session and passed via voice vote on the assembly floor but just ran out of time in the Senate.

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

*Gabriel Chernov*

Gabriel Chernov  
Owner/director, Birch Trail Camp





Jason Feldgreber, Owner/Director

[campmenominee.com](http://campmenominee.com)

Chairperson VanderMeer and members of the committee  
[www.menominee.com](http://www.menominee.com)

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Jason Feldgreber and I'm the owner and director of Camp Menominee, a summer camp for children in Eagle River, WI. We serve campers from across the US, and staff from around the world. We have a significant economic impact on the community each year. Camps like our contribute to the Northwoods economy through job creation, real estate taxes, food budget, services and good from vendors, insurance, parents visiting weekend, shopping and so much more.

#### **Assembly Bill 155**

Our camp, and many others, typically service campers for 8-weeks each summer, with the campers attending for varying lengths of time. We go through a rigorous inspection process through the American Camping Association that includes hundreds of standards and practices over every operational area of camp. In addition, we comply annually with water tests, fire inspections, the state health inspection and any other state or county requirements in our short season of operation. The state inspectors often have an intimate knowledge of the camps they work with, having inspected that camp for many years. They are aware of the operational effectiveness of the camp directors, the standards to which they comply and the history of regulatory compliance. This change to an optional inspection per the view of the department will allow the camp directors to devote more of our time to the fun, health and safety of our community and allow the inspectors to focus their resources where needed, all while maintaining the high level of compliance to state health and safety standards that is expected.

#### **Assembly Bill 159**

Volunteer doctors are an integral part of camp operations during the summer. Camps like ours work to ensure that we have a doctor on site as much as possible to work with our full-time medical staff. Having a doctor on site not only helps keep our campers and staff safe, it also lessens the burden on the local medical systems. Licensed camp doctors are able to diagnose and write prescriptions at camp and avoid trips to the ER or Urgent Care facilities.

More often than not these doctors are only able come up to camp for 1-week at a time. The current process for licensure includes excessive paperwork and testing and can often take up to 6 months. In the last few years, we have had doctors signed on to volunteer but unable to obtain a license in time.

We need this bill to help create an easier path for volunteer doctors to get licensed in Wisconsin, and therefore help us provide the safest camp experience for our campers and staff.

#### **Assembly Bill 166**

Wisconsin camps like ours have worked so hard to become the gold standard for overnight camps in the country. One of the ways we do this is by providing quality medical care for our campers every summer. Nurses often face excessive licensure hurdles, making it more difficult for camps to find and hire qualified health care staff. This bill will help Wisconsin camps provide a safe environment for campers and staff.

Sincerely,

Jason Feldgreber  
Owner/Director – Camp Menominee

#### **MAY 1 - SEPTEMBER 1:**

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Founded in 1928 by Nate & Edna Wasserman  
Camp Menominee is an accredited member of the  
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#### **SEPTEMBER 1 - MAY 1:**

PO Box 171  
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# Assembly Bill 159: Wisconsin Summer Camp Doctor Licensing

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April 1, 2021

Representative Nancy VanderMeer  
Committee on Rural Development  
In Support of Assembly Bill 159

Mr. Chairman,

I have been a camp doctor at North Star Camp for Boys in Hayward, Wisconsin for over twenty years. I volunteer one week of my time to contribute to the overall healthcare of the campers and staff. My role is mostly that of triage and support for the full-time healthcare team at the camp. I am a licensed physician in Minnesota and my need to maintain a full or temporary license in Wisconsin is onerous. I know this restricts other physicians from volunteering their time as camp doctors in Wisconsin. I firmly believe that if Wisconsin were to pass legislation similar to that of Minnesota for camp doctor licensure, more physicians would fill that role. This, in turn, would improve the overall healthcare for countless campers and staff.

William N. Lisberg, MD