

Written Testimony on House Bill 1041

Youth Camps – Structures in Flood Hazard Areas – Prohibition

Position: Favorable

Committee: Health

Sponsors: (Delegates Spiegel, Behler, Fair, Lehman, Lopez, McComas, Metzgar, Mireku–North, Palakovich Carr, Queen, Schindler, and Wolek)

Submitted by:

Cidney Brunson, Director of Operations

Girl Scouts Nation's Capital, 4301 Connecticut Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20008
(Headquarters)

Girl Scouts Nation's Capital Maryland Campgrounds Locations:

Camp Winona, 6885 Winona Pl, Hughesville, MD 20637

Camp Aquasco, 17100 Aquasco Farm Rd, Aquasco, MD 20608

Camp Brighton Woods, 120 Brighton Dam Rd, Brookeville, MD 20833

Girl Scouts Nation's Capital Maryland Office Locations:

7704 Matapeake Business Dr. Suite 220, Brandywine, MD 20613

20251 Century Blvd. Suite 130, Germantown, MD 21703

Testimony:

Girl Scouts Nation's Capital (GSCNC) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 1041 and thanks the bill sponsors for bringing attention to the important issue of youth safety in outdoor recreation settings. Protecting the well-being of young people is a shared responsibility, and we support efforts that seek to further strengthen safety standards for youth programs across Maryland.

Headquartered in Washington, DC, Girl Scouts Nation's Capital is the largest Girl Scout council in the nation, serving more than 43,000 youth and 31,000 adult volunteers across Washington, DC; Maryland; Virginia; and West Virginia. More than 25,000 Maryland youth and adults participate in Girl Scout Nation's Capital programs annually, including many who take part in outdoor leadership experiences and camp programs across the region. To support this work, GSCNC operates eight camp properties and nine offices throughout our council footprint.

Safety is foundational to our camp operations. GSCNC's youth camps operate under rigorous safety standards that include emergency preparedness protocols, weather monitoring systems, evacuation procedures, and routine facility inspections. Many camps

also follow nationally recognized standards established by organizations such as the American Camp Association, which provide comprehensive health and safety oversight for camp programs and facilities.

House Bill 1041 seeks to address flood risk by prohibiting the Maryland Department of Health from issuing or renewing a youth camp certificate if any structure used to house campers is located within a designated flood hazard zone. We appreciate the intent behind this legislation and the opportunity it presents to examine how flood risk is assessed in youth-serving environments. We believe that regularly assessing environmental risk factors is an important component of responsible camp stewardship.

While we support the intent of House Bill 1041 to strengthen youth safety, it is important to recognize that many youth camps in Maryland and across the country were intentionally designed near lakes, rivers, and streams to support outdoor learning and waterfront programming. As a result, FEMA floodplain mapping may include facilities that have safely operated for generations without incident.

Because certification is required for camps to operate, the presence of even one camper housing structure within a mapped flood hazard area could create significant operational implications for youth camps. Addressing these situations may require relocating, reconstructing, or repurposing existing facilities to ensure compliance with the new requirements.

The financial implications of such adjustments can be substantial. Many camps operate as nonprofit programs and rely on philanthropy, grants, and community support to maintain and improve their facilities.

Girl Scouts Nation's Capital is currently working diligently to secure philanthropic and grant funding for several camping capital improvement projects, including safety upgrades, infrastructure improvements, and accessibility enhancements across our properties. Investments like these help ensure that outdoor programs remain safe, inclusive, and accessible for youth across the region.

As the State works to strengthen safety standards for youth camps, we respectfully encourage consideration of opportunities to support camps in achieving compliance with these new requirements. Targeted capital investments, grant programs, or infrastructure partnerships could help camps responsibly update facilities while continuing to provide safe outdoor experiences for Maryland's youth.



Outdoor experiences play a vital role in youth development, fostering leadership, confidence, resilience, and environmental stewardship. Camps provide opportunities for young people to build these skills in safe, supportive environments while forming lasting connections with nature and their communities.

Girl Scouts Nation's Capital appreciates the General Assembly's commitment to protecting Maryland's youth and would welcome the opportunity to work collaboratively with policymakers and state agencies to ensure that these important safety goals are implemented in a way that also sustains the outdoor programs serving thousands of Maryland families each year.

Thank you for your consideration.