



**Pennsylvania Municipal League**  
President – Danene Sorace, Mayor, City of Lancaster



**Pennsylvania State Association of Township Commissioners**  
President – Sam Valenza, Commissioner, Upper Moreland Township

**Pennsylvania Municipal League  
and  
Pennsylvania State Association of Township Commissioners  
Testimony Before the Senate Aging and Youth Committee on  
House Bill 1155 (PN 3020)  
September 12, 2022**

Good Afternoon Chairwoman Ward, Chairwoman Collett and members of the Senate Aging and Youth Committee. I am Amy Sturges, Deputy Executive Director for Advocacy, for the Pennsylvania Municipal League (League) and Pennsylvania State Association of Township Commissioners (PSATC).

Together, the League and PSATC represent nearly 200 full-service, core communities -- cities, boroughs and townships. Full service municipalities provide the spectrum of services to their residents including police, fire, EMS, code enforcement, recycling, trash collection and recreation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on House Bill 1155. The League and PSATC support the measure; and as this session comes to a close, we encourage the Committee to move the bill to the full Senate for its consideration.

Municipal recreation programs are as diverse as their communities. One aspect that they all have in common, however, is the goal of meeting the needs of their respective communities and residents while being both safety and cost conscious. The overarching purpose of municipal recreation is to provide residents with opportunities to enhance their quality of life. Recreation, whether it be simple open space, playgrounds, or a full range of programs and services, enriches residents' mental and physical health, and their social connections to their peers, neighborhoods and communities. The mission statements of municipal recreation departments demonstrate this commitment with phrases like: quality and affordable

learning opportunities; community interaction; learn, play, connect; creative diverse programming and experiences for all ages, backgrounds and abilities; and provide safe and needed recreation facilities.

Pre-school summer camps offered by municipal recreation programs are affordably priced, short-term, and flexible in their attendance requirements. They are also offered in the community at neighborhood parks, schools, and playgrounds. They provide an opportunity for preschoolers to socialize and learn in a new and fun environment outside their homes. These programs are filling a need in core communities for families that do not need or cannot afford a day care center summer program for their preschoolers.

As discussed today, House Bill 1155 seeks to clarify that municipal summer camps for pre-school age children are excluded from the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services' regulations pertaining to child day care centers. Under the bill, pre-school summer camps would still be required to adhere to safety and care standards. Municipal governing bodies would be required to adopt an ordinance setting out health and safety standards consistent with the Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society's (PRPS) protocol for public preschool recreation programs. If these standards are not adopted, a pre-school summer camp cannot be offered. Our members view this approach as a middle ground that will allow them to continue to offer pre-school camps with safety as a primary goal.

Summer camps, whether in the day care or recreation setting, place the health, safety, and well-being of campers as the highest priority. The PRPS standards mentioned above fit more appropriately with short-term programs while still addressing important health and safety considerations including: duration of programs; staffing ratios; state and federal background clearances, training and supervision of personnel; supervision of children; age requirements for children; safety and security procedures; health and well-being procedures; and facility compliance with safety inspections and local codes. Additionally, municipal recreation sites, structures, personnel and programs are subject to risk management protocols, in addition to any other applicable state and federal regulations.

The unfortunate reality is that mandating that municipal pre-school summer camps fall under the Department's child day care center regulations will result in a loss of these important and popular summer programs. Many local governments will find the requirements prohibitively expensive and simply stop offering the programs. Municipalities that have the means to adhere to the regulations may continue, but the cost of the programs will inevitably increase. In either case, such programs will become less accessible to socio and economically disadvantaged families.

The well-being and safety of anyone participating in municipal recreation programs or using municipal parks is paramount to municipal officials and municipal recreation departments. We believe the current language of House Bill 1155 addresses both the interest in continuing municipal pre-school camps and ensuring the safety of campers. Again, we ask the Committee to move House Bill 1155 to the full Senate.

Thank you for your time. I am happy to answer any questions.