



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Elijah Reichlin-Melnick

## Senator Elijah Reichlin-Melnick and Assemblymember Amy Paulin Announce New Law Protecting Campers from Sexual Predators

ELIJAH REICHLIN-MELNICK August 16, 2022

**ROCKLAND, NY - Senator Elijah Reichlin-Melnick** (D-Rockland/Westchester) and **Assemblymember Amy Paulin** (D-Westchester) visited Deerkill Day Camp in Suffern to discuss a new law they authored to help protect campers across New York State. Members of the New York State Camp Directors Association who advocated for the bill joined the legislators for the announcement about the bill ([S3966B/A8136B](#)) being signed into law.

The new law that Paulin and Reichlin-Melnick championed in their respective chambers requires all children's camps in New York State, including unregistered camps which are often single-purpose camps like a soccer clinic or a band camp, to check whether employees are listed on state and national sex offender registries.

**Assemblymember Amy Paulin** said, "When parents send their children to summer camp, they want their children to have a fun and healthy experience, but foremost they need to know that they are in a safe environment. With this new legislation, all camps are now required to check their employees' and volunteers' backgrounds on both the state and national sex offender registries. I'll continue to fight for common-sense laws such as this to protect children and give families peace-of-mind when sending their children to camp in New York State."

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*Senator Elijah Reichlin-Melnick said, “This is a common-sense law. For too many years, parents would send their kids to camp assuming that the counselors had been required to go through a background check to make sure that they were not on the sex-offender registry. And yet until now, for thousands of kids in New York attending unregistered camps, that was not the case. I’m proud to have introduced and passed this bill in the Senate, and I will continue to fight for laws to protect the children of New York State.”*

**Assemblymember Ken Zebrowski** said, “Parents must have confidence that every camp in NY state is conducting proper background checks for their employees. This bill closes a loophole that put countless kids at risk and I was proud to support Senator Reichlin-Melnick and Assemblywoman Paulin as they got this legislation passed and signed into law.”

**Todd Rothman, Deerkill Day Camp Director & New York State Camp Directors Association Board Member** said, "Summer camp holds a special place in the development of children. It provides them a unique opportunity outside of the traditional classroom setting to build self-esteem while gaining confidence and skills in a safe and supportive environment. But every long-standing director knows a camp is only as good as its staff. This important legislation is a critical step in ensuring that staff at all camps, registered and unregistered, are subject to background checks that will further provide parents with the confidence that their child will be in good hands each summer. We cannot thank Senator Reichlin-Melnick, Assemblymember Paulin and Governor Hochul enough for their efforts in ensuring that all campers in New York State are supported by qualified and capable staff."

"Camps are formative, happy experiences for children, but above all they need to be safe," said **Jamie Sirkin, President, New York State Camp Directors Association**. "We thank Assemblymember Amy Paulin and NYS Senator Elijah Reichlin-Melnick for their work in authoring and passing legislation which requires all camps in New York State to screen

potential employees on the national and state sex offender registries - safeguarding the welfare of children. We applaud Governor Hochul for signing this critical piece of legislation into law, helping to further ensure that children at summer camps will be in a safe environment.”

**Kyle A. Stewart, Executive Director, Alliance of New York State YMCAs** remarked, “The health and safety of children is the number one priority of YMCAs across the Empire State. Summer camp experiences are an integral part of positive childhood development, which is the Y's mission. We strive to promote and support all efforts that strengthen child protection provisions at both state and federal level. To that end, background clearances such as these are an important tool that encourages programs to achieve due diligence when hiring staff and choosing volunteers.”