

JIM BANKS
THIRD DISTRICT, INDIANA



COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE

SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE
STRATEGIC COMPETITION
BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE
CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1403

June 12, 2023

Tom Rosenberg
Chief Executive Officer
American Camp Association
5000 State Road 67 North
Martinsville, IN
46151-7902

Mr. Rosenberg,

Camp Whitley, a summer camp on Troy Cedar Lake in my hometown of Columbia City, Indiana that I attended, recently began requiring incoming campers, aged seven to fourteen, to include their “preferred pronouns” in their camper registration form. Many of my constituents have reached out to my office and to Camp Whitley to express concern with their promotion of transgender ideology to minor campers.

In a letter to the Whitley County community, the Camp Whitley Board of Directors wrote that they asked Hoosier children about their preferred pronouns to “align ourselves with the American Camp Association recommendations.”

The American Camp Association (ACA) is the country’s largest camp accreditation body and according to your website “the only national accrediting body for camps of all types.” Your organization accredits over 2,500 U.S. camps based on their compliance with standards that are mostly focused on health and safety.

However, at least when it comes to gender, the ACA has also used its accreditation process to enforce partisan standards that ignore medical evidence and endangers camper’s health. The ACA’s “Checklist for Gender Inclusive Practices at Camp” lists fourteen recommendations for children’s summer camps including offering the “option to share gender identity (M, F, Trans)” on camp registration forms, requiring staff to undergo transgender sensitivity training, and giving biological male campers access to girls’ showers, restrooms and overnight facilities.

Additionally, the Indiana Nonprofit Corporation Act of 1991 prohibits the ACA from using a “substantial” portion of its resources on “propaganda.” However, the ACA has devoted significant time and effort towards boosting far-left gender ideology. The ACA recommends that

camps send out gender inclusive marketing materials, and in its “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Package 2.0” training for summer camp employees, the ACA offers courses titled “Understanding The Trans* Experience at Camp (Chris Rehs-Dupin),” “Camper Gender Support Plans – Building Blocks,” “Trans Two: The Next Level,” and “Transgender Staff at Camp.”

The ACA’s divisive and partisan gender guidelines violate my and many Hoosiers’ core beliefs. In my opinion, they clash with the ACA’s core mission of “enriching the lives of children, youth and adults through the camp experience.”

To help me better understand why you are pushing Hoosier children to discuss their “gender identity,” please send a written response to the following questions to my office no later than June 14th, 2023:

1. How has pressuring Camp Whitley to ask children their “preferred pronouns” furthered the ACA’s goal of increasing “understanding of and support for the value of the camp experience”?
2. Does sharing restrooms, showers, and sleeping quarters with the opposite biological sex “enrich the lives of children”?
 - Does the ACA have guidelines related to the safety and preferences of children who would rather not share facilities with member of the opposite sex?
3. Why is it important for camps to send out gender inclusive marketing materials?
4. What do you mean by a camp activity that is not “inclusive of flexible gender identities”?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Banks". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Jim Banks
Member of Congress