



## COMPS 36 for summer camp employees; urgent

Quinn Krause

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To: michael.primo@state.co.us

Hello,

I am emailing you today because of some concerns on COMPS 36 and seasonal camp staff employees. I do not believe the 16-21 year olds that work at the Peaceful Valley Scout Ranch are compensated fairly. While I understand there was an amendment made to COMPS 36 in march, what I need to stress is that the management of the summer camps are using the blanket term "all exemptions for seasonal summer staff" to work us 7 days a week, 24 hours a day.

Last summer, we went the first **three weeks** without being allowed to leave (we would be fired). In order to save money, the camp uses the seasonal staff to avoid paying laborers. We regularly do things such as clearing forests to make parking lots (yes, this actually happens), moving tent plats that weigh several hundred pounds (every week, we call them tent crews), and other hard physical labor, for barely a dollar an hour. I understand the importance of cheap seasonal summer camp employees, but there **needs to be protection for employees so that we are not being exploited. We are being exploited.** We put up with the horrendous conditions (such as the canvas wall tents for "lodging," using port-a-potties 9 weeks straight, camp food that we sometimes have to ration because they accidentally don't make enough, being cussed at because we aren't clearing forests to make a parking lot after working 3 weeks straight, etc.) because we love giving back to the kids.

I was excited to read the minimum wage laws being extended to summer camp employees, as the work that we are required to do is much more of a day laborer than a swimming instructor. One time, we were not allowed to leave for our one-night-break for the weekend until we moved 2000 wooden cots off of trucks. It took 8 hours. We left at 7pm Saturday night and had to report back at 11:00am Sunday. Additional compensation? None. Why? Seasonal summer camp employee. Did we ask to leave? Yes, we were told that anyone who left before those cots were unloaded would be fired. The only thing that separates the "seasonal summer camp employee" and a normal laborer is the amount of hours spent working consecutively. The normal laborer is protected with over-time, he is paid minimum wage as he stretches his work out over the year. A summer camp employee works triple the amount of hours for 1/10 the pay.

What I am urging you to do is make sure that there are some protections in COMPS to make sure seasonal staff are not being exploited as we have been. I have watched as the number of staff at my camp used to be almost 200 strong in 2014, to not being able to fulfill the 70 positions minimum. There are dozens of loopholes that camps exploit to save money. For example, they are required to provide a uniform. Thus, they supply a single shirt to get us through the entire week, and we buy the remaining 5 because we are required to look clean and presentable. I couldn't imagine wearing the same shirt all week, let alone at camp where you're camping.

I hope that other summer camps do the responsible thing: hire professional arborists to clear forests, provide a reasonable amount uniforms, adhere to time off. But mine doesn't. Last summer, they built a \$10 million dining pavilion. They have the funds to hire professional workers, or to pay us more, but they won't do that if they don't need to.

I hope to hear from you, this has been a pressing problem for many years.

Thanks,

Quinn Krause