

Good afternoon, thank you for time in regard to this life-saving bill. Today I will tell you about my experience with ISR both as a parent and a former health inspector that inspected public swimming pools for almost 15 years.

First, some quick background information, I am married and have 4 children, 3 boys ranging in age from 13 to 5 and a little girl that is 19 months old. Shortly after having my fourth child, my husband and I decided that it would be a good decision for me to stay home. Prior to staying home with my children, I worked at the Putnam County Health Department as a Registered Sanitarian, aka health inspector, for the better part of the last 17 years.

Now for my experience with Infant Swim Resource and private vs public pools. I became aware of ISR because I had seen a friend's post about ISR about a year ago and instantly did some research to see if it was available anywhere close to our home. We have an almost one acre pond and I constantly worry about water safety, especially for our youngest. I found a certified instructor, Annette Lazenby, that was going to travel teach lessons at the pool located in a nursing home approximately 30 miles from our home. I signed up immediately. On the first day of our lesson, I arrived at the nursing home about 20 minutes early for the lesson only to find Miss Annette sitting on the side of an empty pool because the administration of the pool would not allow her access into the pool to set up until her allotted time, even though it was completely empty and no residents were waiting for access. The pool at this facility was located in the basement, and as soon as I opened the door to the stairs going down to the basement pool, I noticed a very strong chlorine odor. As a former health inspector, I knew that, contrary to popular belief, this strong chlorine odor indicated that the facility's water chemistry was out of balance and that there was a high combined chlorine level. I also noticed that the lighting in the area was not great and that there was a little mold on some of the windows, which was probably the result of inadequate ventilation in such a moist environment. For my daughter's initial lessons, we had daily 10 minute lessons for 6 weeks. Every day we were there the chlorine smell was strong, which indicated that the chemistry was off. I was tempted to report the problem to the local health department, but I was afraid that the administration would not allow us to complete our lessons and I knew it was so important.

The public pool also had more distractions, which were detrimental to the lessons. Occasionally residents or maintenance staff would walk by or into the pool room. This was a distraction for my daughter that was not ideal.

After our daughter's initial lessons were complete, Miss Annette made the decision to not travel to this remote site, which was over 30 minutes from her home anymore due to the difficulties with the administration. I was initially disappointed because traveling to her home for lessons was a 60 minute drive each way, compared to the 30 minute drive to the nursing home, but I am determined to ensure that my daughter is safe and can save herself in an emergency. Let me be clear that I would never, knowingly allow my daughter to have unsupervised access to our pond or any other body of water, BUT no parent can anticipate everything and I want to be prepared. I signed up for a 2 week refresher in January with Miss Annette. On our first day, I remember walking into her pool and not being overwhelmed by a chlorine smell and I was impressed with the lighting and cleanliness. It was also a very cheerful and welcoming environment, which, although not something that is important from my perspective as a former health inspector, as a mom, it was much more welcoming and relaxed. I remember making a remark to Miss Annette, that I was impressed with her pool and water chemistry because I could tell that it was in balance and crystal clear. She replied that she takes pride in her pool and is very particular about her chemicals. I could tell this already because we always had the last morning lesson and as soon as she got out of the pool, she would take her chemical reading every day. I

also asked to see her chemical report, just because I was curious, and it was in line with the chlorine, alkalinity and pH requirements for public pools.

Normally once a child is skilled they come back for 2 week Refreshers every 6 months. Since Miss Annette can no longer find a pool closer to us, my only option is her indoor private pool. Because my drive is so far, we have modified the 2 week Refresher to a one to two day a week Maintenance. I have been doing that since our refresher ended in mid-January, until the Coronavirus lockdown started in mid March. This arrangement worked well for us as it allowed for me to make the long drive with my daughter just once a week and she still retained her lifesaving skills. It also allowed me the unique perspective of seeing the conditions of her pool every week for those months. Her pool was always well maintained and with no heavy chlorine smell or mold issues.

Now, I'd briefly like to speak about my thoughts on SB 309. This bill is important for so many reasons.

First, to make all lessons only available in licensed public pools would drastically reduce availability. In my area last year there were many parents scrambling and posting Facebook questions as to availability of lessons as the public pools were either booked up, or they did not feel the lesson(s) were a good fit for their child or the quality was not what they expected. I remember when I was a child, my parents had us take lessons from a cousin who was a lifeguard. I remember learning a lot and having fun at those lessons.

Second, I don't want to downplay the importance of licensure. For pools that are truly public pools where people can come and go, licensure allows for the local health department to check the conditions of those pools. However, licensure should not provide a false sense of security. For the entire 15 years I inspected public pools, the requirement was that Public pools only be inspected once per year. Some jurisdictions would inspect more frequently, but the standard was simply once per year. For a private home to have to get licensed would be almost impossible due to the administrative requirements, such as having architecture plans before construction.

In closing, this Bill is a common sense, life saving bill. You are allowing children to learn life saving skills from CERTIFIED instructors one on one in a private pool and I think that this is a good piece of common sense legislation that will save lives.