



July 27, 2011

The Honorable George Miller
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Miller:

The undersigned members of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Ad Hoc Child Abuse Prevention and Education Task Forces are pleased to support the introduction of the Stop Child Abuse in Residential Programs for Teens Act. CCD is a coalition of over 100 national disability organizations working together to advocate for national public policy that ensures the self-determination, independence, empowerment, integration and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities in all aspects of society.

We applaud this legislation as a necessary response to the cases of child abuse and neglect, some even resulting in death, investigated by Protection and Advocacy Systems and the Government Accountability Office (GAO). Programs designed to offer treatment for mental health or substance abuse must use quality programs grounded in best practices that ensure the safety of children. Families often have to make extremely difficult choices when seeking placements for children with these types of needs. Unfortunately, a number of the programs your legislation seeks to regulate flourish because parents lack even the most basic information, including whether their children will be treated humanely.

Data from the *Child Maltreatment 2006* report shows that children reported as having a disability were 54 percent more likely to be victims of maltreatment than children without disabilities. Of course, we also know that abuse and neglect can cause disability. This legislation could help prevent the maltreatment of children with disabilities as well as reduce the risk of children developing disabilities as a result of abuse.

The Stop Child Abuse in Residential Programs for Teens Act addresses this issue in a straightforward and thoughtful manner. The bill recognizes the important role of both the federal and state governments in protecting children from abuse and neglect at the hands of some residential programs. Additionally, the bill will provide families with the critical information necessary to make informed decisions.

We commend you for your hard work on this legislation, and look forward to working with you to get it enacted into law.

Sincerely,

Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Autism National Committee
Bazelon Center on Mental Health Law
Council for Learning Disabilities
Council of Parents Attorneys and Advocates
Easter Seals
Higher Education Consortium for Special Education
Mental Health America
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Disability Rights Network
National Down Syndrome Congress
National Down Syndrome Society
National Respite Coalition
Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children
The Arc of the United States
The Advocacy Institute
United Cerebral Palsy