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Representative George Miller
2205 Rayburn HOB
Washington DC 20515

Dear Representative Miller,

I am writing on behalf of the American Association of Children's Residential Centers (AACRC) regarding HR 911, The Stop Child Abuse in Residential Treatment Bill. I know from conversations with your office that it is your intent to put forward the Bill again in this session in the identical form in which it passed the House of Representatives during the last congress. We at AACRC wanted to convey our continuing support for the Bill.

As you may know, we worked with a coalition of five national groups, including three advocacy groups (ASTART, SAFETY, and NYRA) that were very concerned about abuses in residential treatment, to propose changes in the language that would reduce potential unintended consequences in the bill. We submitted the proposed language changes to your office during the last Congress and can make them available to you again on request. We appreciate the continuing interest and willingness of your staff to work with us as we move forward on language that will actualize the bill's intent and minimize unintended consequences. We at AACRC remain committed to working with you in the process and look forward to that opportunity.

You may also know that there have been ongoing conversations around the country regarding improving and reforming residential treatment. A major national effort is the Building Bridges Initiative (BBI- www.buildingbridges4youth.org), under the auspices of SAMHSA, which is advancing partnerships between families, youth, policy makers, funders, and both residential and community based providers to improve services and supports available for children who might need residential treatment, and their families. This ongoing initiative has galvanized activities in states around the country and is beginning to change the shape and dimensions of the system.

Additionally, AACRC recently convened a meeting of national associations that have interest in or membership from the residential treatment field at its offices in Milwaukee. This meeting included representatives from therapeutic boarding schools and wilderness programs, the major national associations historically affiliated with residential treatment, advocacy groups,

and several other national organizations. The outcome was very heartening, resulting in a statement of shared belief and follow up workgroups to make recommendations regarding the regulatory environment and marketing practices. When the statement has finished the vetting process and is approved for dissemination I will be sure to send a copy to you.

Your effort to promulgate and staunchly support this legislation has generated a great deal of activity that is yielding positive outcomes in reshaping individual residential programs and the system. On behalf of AACRC, which has been working to “redefine residential” for years, we applaud your efforts on behalf of America’s children, youth and families. I am attaching a copy of our first eight monographs on Redefining Residential for your review.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or would like to learn more about our activities to improve residential treatment or to discuss any aspect of this bill or our proposed changes. Thanks once again.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert E. Lieberman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line underneath it.

Robert E. Lieberman, M.A., LPC
AACRC Public Policy Chair

Enclosure