

July 13, 2011

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

Dear Mr. Miller:

On behalf of the Association of University Centers on Disabilities, I am writing to thank you for introducing the Stop Child Abuse in Residential Programs for Teens Act. AUCD is committed to preventing the abuse and maltreatment of children in residential programs and applauds 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).

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.

Programs offering 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 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.

Our University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities strive to inform parents, educators and professionals about the threats of child abuse and maltreatment, as well as offer options designed to support individuals and families who have suffered abuse and maltreatment and acquired a developmental disability as a result. AUCD also raises awareness of this issue through collaborative workgroups with other disability organizations to educate professionals who come into contact with children who have been maltreated.

The Stop Child Abuse in Residential Programs for Teens Act recognizes, and balances properly, 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.

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

Sincerely,



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