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May 13, 2008

The Honorable George Miller  
Chairman  
Committee on Education and Labor  
2181 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Miller:

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), an organization of 60,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical sub-specialists, and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety, and well-being of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults, would like to express our support for H.R. 5876, the Stop Child Abuse in Residential Programs for Teens Act.

The AAP has been deeply concerned about reports in recent years of child abuse and neglect resulting in injuries and deaths at unregulated residential programs for children and adolescents. The AAP strongly opposes child maltreatment in all its forms, regardless of the setting in which it takes place. Some of these facilities appear to be engaging in activities that run contrary to accepted practices in the field of behavioral treatment, while others have been documented to employ frankly abusive techniques.

H.R. 5876, the Stop Child Abuse in Residential Programs for Teens Act, would establish a framework for the regulation and inspection of residential programs that offer specialized therapy or behavior modification for children and adolescents. The bill would ensure that facilities adhere to minimum child protection standards and disclose staff training and qualifications. It would also require parents to be informed of any changes to a child's health care regimen, such as changes to medication. Each of these measures will improve transparency and help ensure the quality of such programs.

The AAP commends you for your commitment to the health and safety of all our nation's children. We look forward to working with you to support H.R. 5876 as it moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Renée R. Jenkins".

Renée R. Jenkins, MD, FAAP  
President