



February 9, 2009

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

Dear Chairman Miller:

The National Disability Rights Network is pleased to write today in support of H.R. 911 the "Stop Child Abuse in Residential Programs for Teens Act of 2009." Your legislation is a needed response to the cases of child abuse and neglect, some even resulting in death, investigated by Protection and Advocacy (P&A) Systems around the country and similarly documented cases investigated by the Government Accountability Office (GAO).

The National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) is the nonprofit membership organization for the federally mandated P&A Systems for individuals with disabilities. There is a P&A System in every state, territory and the District of Columbia. Collectively, the P&A network is the largest provider of legally based advocacy services to people with disabilities in the United States.

NDRN and the P&A Systems are working to ensure that families who place their children in programs for mental health or substance abuse do so in quality programs grounded in best-practices that ensure the safety of children. Usually, families 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 if their children will be treated humanely.

H.R. 911 addresses this issue in a straight-forward and thoughtful manner. Your legislation recognizes, and balances properly, the important role both the federal and state governments can play in protecting our children from abuse and neglect at the hands of some residential program. Additionally, your legislation will provide families with the critical information necessary to make an informed decision on this important matter.

NDRN commends you for your hard work on this legislation, and your lifetime of attention to this issue. We look forward to working with you to get this critical legislation enacted into law.

Sincerely,



Curt Decker
Executive Director