



February 10, 2009

The Honorable George Miller
Chairman
House Education and Labor Committee

Chairman Miller,

The Arc of the United States and United Cerebral Palsy would like to offer our support for the Stop Child Abuse in Residential Programs for Teens Act of 2009.

As you are well aware, children and young adults with behavioral, emotional, mental health and substance abuse needs often require significant supports to live well in their community. Most often, those needs can be met in the community. For a very small percentage of children, however, those needs may require limited stays in public or private residential programs.

Whether at home or in alternate residential programs, children's safety comes first. Children subjected to abusive environments cannot learn, grow, or reach their potential.

Given the repeated, substantiated claims of abuse and death in residential facilities, legislation is needed to ensure that our country's children are safe, properly cared for, and situated to learn and grow to the best of their abilities. We believe the Stop Child Abuse in Residential Programs for Teens Act of 2009 provides the reporting mechanisms, funding, surveillance, and training requirements needed to ensure that facilities are staffed with qualified, equipped, and safe personnel.

We thank you for your continued leadership in protecting all of America's children including those most vulnerable to neglect and abuse. If The Arc and UCP can offer any technical support, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Paul G. Marchand'.

Paul Marchand
Staff Director
The Disability Policy Collaboration
A Partnership of The Arc and United Cerebral Palsy