

Joseph Cautilli, Ph.D.
Chair

Crime, Delinquency and Forensic Behavior Analysis
Special Interest Group of the
Association for Behavior Analysis International

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The Honorable Patrick J. Leahy
Chairman
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
224 Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Herbert H. Kohl
United States Senate
330 Senate Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Arlen Specter
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
152 Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Durbin
United States Senate
309 Senate Hart Office Building

Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Leahy, Specter, Kohl, and Durbin,

The Association for Behavior Analysis International (<http://www.abainternational.org/>) Special Interest Group in Crime, Delinquency, & Forensic Behavior Analysis has over 150 members. We are devoted to the use of evidenced based practices in the treatment of offenders. Many evidence based practices have emerged from behavior analysis including Teaching Family Homes and Behavioral Parent Training. Interventions from behavior analysis have been shown to reduce prison misconduct (French & Gendreau, 2006) and recidivism by as much as 15-20% (Redondo-Illescas, Sanchez-Meca, & Garrido-Genovaes, 2001). Teaching Family homes have been particularly effective as a safe alternative to prison and a reducer of future recidivism (see Kingsley, Ringle, Thompson, Chmelka, & Ingram, (2008) . We are proud to support S. 678. We hope it leads to more evidenced based behavior management practices with juveniles.

S. 678 strengthens and updates critical components of the Juvenile Justice Delinquency and Prevention Act (JJDPA). This Act has been protecting youth across the nation for over 30 years. S. 678 makes meaningful improvements that expand several of the core protections and other areas contained in the bill.

One of the strengths of S. 678 is it creates a new incentive grant program for States that wish to employ empirically-sound prevention and intervention approaches. We believe that behavior analysis interventions often termed positive behavioral support, behavior management or behavior modification will be adopted by justice facilities. This will provide youth with critical interventions based on function to lessen problem behaviors.

The bill also improves work in the areas of workforce development, and diversion for youth with mental health and substance abuse needs. We would like to see even greater emphasis on use of evidence-based or promising approaches including the Community Reinforcement Approach which has been shown to be effective with adolescent drug and alcohol abuse (Azrin, et al. 1994, 1996).

Sincerely,

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References

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