



**Statement of the
American Civil Liberties Union**

Deborah J. Vagins
Senior Legislative Counsel
American Civil Liberties Union
Washington Legislative Office

For a Hearing on Bill No. 30-0136

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U.S. Virgin Islands Legislature
Committee on Education and Workforce Development

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I. Introduction

Dear Chairman Cole, Honorable Members of the Committee, distinguished Senators, ladies and gentlemen, and the listening and viewing audience:

My name is Deborah J. Vagins. I am a Senior Legislative Counsel in the American Civil Liberties Union's Washington Legislative Office. On behalf of the ACLU, its over half a million members, countless additional supporters and activists, and fifty-three affiliates nationwide, I thank the Committee on Education and Workforce Development for inviting me to testify at this hearing on Bill No. 30-0136 and to provide a national overview on the use of corporal punishment in schools and its negative impact on students' educational success. The ACLU is a nationwide, non-partisan organization working daily in courts, U.S. Congress, state legislatures and communities to defend and preserve the civil rights and liberties that the Constitution and laws of the United States guarantee everyone in this country.

At the Washington Legislative Office, I lead the office's advocacy efforts on federal legislation and executive branch actions concerning a variety of civil rights issues, including school discipline and corporal punishment, racial disparities in education, and the school-to-prison pipeline. I am pleased to submit this testimony for the record in support of this bill, with the modifying amendment, banning the use of corporal punishment in public schools.

II. Overview of the ACLU's Work

The ACLU has been a leader in the effort to bring an end to the use of corporal punishment in schools through advocacy at the state, federal, and international level.¹ In Congress, our office spearheads coalition efforts to pass federal legislation, the Ending Corporal Punishment in Schools Act introduced by Representative Carolyn McCarthy (D-NY),² which would ban the use of corporal punishment in public schools and private schools that serve students receiving federal services. In addition, we have urged additional data collection on corporal punishment in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and also advocated that the Obama Administration expand the Department of Education's Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) to include new categories on corporal punishment. Right now, due to our urging, the Administration has proposed expanding the its data collection to include the physical punishment of pre-K students and all *incidents* of corporal punishment at all grade levels. Unfortunately, this collection does not currently apply to the territories.

In partnership with Human Rights Watch, the ACLU's Human Rights Program has issued two reports, *Impairing Education*³ and *A Violent Education*,⁴ examining the use of corporal

¹ AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION, RACE & ETHNICITY IN AMERICA (2007), available at <https://www.aclu.org/human-rights/race-ethnicity-america-turning-blind-eye-injustice>.

² Ending Corporal Punishment in Schools Act, H.R. 3027, 112th Cong. (2011).

³ AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION & HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH, IMPAIRING EDUCATION (2009), available at <http://www.aclu.org/human-rights/impairing-education-corporal-punishment-students-disabilities-us-public-schools> [hereinafter IMPAIRING EDUCATION].

punishment in public schools across the United States using data collected from interviews with hundreds of children, parents, and teachers. My testimony today is based largely on that joint work and on the joint testimony we submitted before a U.S. House of Representatives' education subcommittee for a 2010 hearing on corporal punishment.⁵

While we will continue to fight on all these fronts at the federal level, it is critical that states and territories continue to pass state and local bans on this arcane practice.

III. Overview of the National Problem

According to the most recent national data available, during the 2006-2007 school year, almost a quarter million students in the U.S. were subjected to corporal punishment.⁶ Today, despite the many problems associated with the hitting or paddling of students, corporal punishment is still a legal form of school discipline in 19 states⁷ and the U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam. Other U.S. territories have passed laws or regulations banning the practice in public schools or have placed very narrow restrictions on its use. Puerto Rico banned its use in 1999⁸ and the Northern Mariana Islands and American Samoa prohibit the practice through regulations and education department policies.⁹ In Guam, although the practice is still lawful, its use is only permitted by the principal as a last resort and only with the signed notarized consent of a parent.¹⁰ While we do not think restrictions are sufficient by any means – only a ban is sufficient – it shows that the Virgin Islands is an outlier in the territories for failing to eliminate or restrict this practice.

While a quarter million students subjected to this practice is significant, these numbers do not tell the whole story. These statistics only reflect data which has been self-reported to the U.S. Department of Education; it includes only public schools; it does not include data from the

⁴ AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION & HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH, A VIOLENT EDUCATION (2008), *available at* <https://www.aclu.org/human-rights-racial-justice/violent-education-corporal-punishment-children-us-public-schools> [hereinafter A VIOLENT EDUCATION].

⁵ *Corporal Punishment in Schools and Its Effect on Academic Success: Hearing Before the Subcomm. on Healthy Families and Communities of the H. Comm. on Education and Labor*, 111th Cong. (2010) (statement of the American Civil Liberties Union and Human Rights Watch), *available at* https://www.aclu.org/files/assets/ACLU-HRW_Statement_on_Corp_Punish_for_House_Healthy_Families_Subcomm_hrg_FINAL.pdf.

⁶ During the 2006-2007 school year, at least 223,190 students in the U.S. were subjected to corporal punishment. *See* U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS, CIVIL RIGHTS DATA COLLECTION 2006, http://ocrdata.ed.gov/Projections_2006.aspx (last accessed April 1, 2010) [hereinafter CIVIL RIGHTS DATA COLLECTION].

⁷ Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Wyoming. *See* IMPAIRING EDUCATION, *supra* note 3, at 27.

⁸ Organic Act of the Department of Education of Puerto Rico, 3 L.P.R.A. §144i, § 3.10 (1999). “Students shall observe the standards of behavior that are promulgated to ensure the orderly performance of the school. The violation of these standards will bring about the imposition of sanctions that will vary from a slight admonishment, to expelling the student. The sanction of suspension and expelling the student shall not be imposed without undergoing due process of law, except in those cases indicated in Section 3.11 of this Act. *Corporal punishment is forbidden.*” (*emphasis added*) *Id.*

⁹ Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, Legality of Corporal Punishment Worldwide, http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org/pages/progress/table_a-d.html (last visited Sept. 30, 2013).

¹⁰ *Id.* *See also*, Guam Department of Education, Policy 410- Corporal Punishment (1991), *available at* <https://sites.google.com/a/gdoe.net/education-policy-board/board-policy/student-conduct-400-471>.

territories where it is still legal; and it only includes the *number of students* who are subjected to corporal punishment during the school year, not the total *number of times* that an individual student has been hit during the school year.¹¹ Therefore, this number is a low reporting of what is actually happening to our nation's students.

It is important to describe the types of instruments with which children are hit by school personnel. In our investigations, instruments have included a wooden paddle, approximately 15 inches long, between two and four inches wide, and one-half inch thick, with a six inch handle at one end.¹² The paddle can be modified to improve the paddler's swing. For example, by adding holes to the paddle, it reduces wind resistance, allowing it to move faster and inflict more pain.¹³ The ACLU has also received reports of students, especially younger children, being struck with other objects, including rulers and belts.¹⁴

IV. The Impact of Corporal Punishment On Students' Academic Performance and Well-Being

Aside from the infliction of pain and the physical injuries which often result from the use physical punishments, these violent disciplinary methods impact students' academic achievement and long-term well-being. In fact, one study found that in states where corporal punishment is frequently used, schools have performed worse academically than those in states that prohibit corporal punishment.¹⁵ While most states demonstrated improvements in their American College Testing (ACT) scores from 1994 to 2010, three-quarters of states that use corporal punishment "scored below average on the ACT composite, and half had improvement rates that fell short of the national trend."¹⁶ At the same time "students in the ten states that paddled the most had the worst test results and showed the least improvement in their scores. . . . Ninety percent of heavy-paddling states had below average ACT scores, and seven of the ten worst scores were from the heaviest paddling school systems in the country."¹⁷

Many children who have been subjected to hitting, paddling or other harsh disciplinary practices have reported subsequent problems with depression, fear and anger.¹⁸ These students frequently withdraw from school activities and disengage academically.¹⁹ The Society for Adolescent Medicine has found that victims of corporal punishment often develop "deteriorating peer relationships, difficulty with concentration, lowered school achievement, antisocial behavior,

¹¹ School districts may fail to report corporal punishment data to the Department of Education and many incidents may not be recorded in the first place. See A VIOLENT EDUCATION, *supra* note 4, at 45-46 ;IMPAIRING EDUCATION, *supra* note 3, at 30-31.

¹² A VIOLENT EDUCATION, *supra* note 4, at 14.

¹³ *Id.* at 17.

¹⁴ *Id.* at 22.

¹⁵ Center for Effective Discipline: Paddling Versus ACT– A Retrospective Analysis, <http://www.stophitting.com/index.php?page=paddlingvsact> (last visited Oct. 3, 2013).

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ *Id.* The ten states that paddled the most include, in order, Mississippi, Arkansas, Alabama, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Tennessee, Texas, Georgia, Missouri, and Florida. *Id.*

¹⁸ See A VIOLENT EDUCATION, *supra* note 4, at 54; IMPAIRING EDUCATION, *supra* note 3, at 42-43.

¹⁹ See A VIOLENT EDUCATION, *supra* note 4, at 54; IMPAIRING EDUCATION, *supra* note 3, at 43-44.

intense dislike of authority, somatic complaints, a tendency for school avoidance and school drop-out, and other evidence of negative high-risk adolescent behavior.”²⁰ Other research has found that physical punishment is linked to slower cognitive development, which adversely affects academic performance.²¹ One student interviewed for *A Violent Education* described the effects of corporal punishment on his attitude towards school:

- “[Y]ou could get a paddling for almost anything. I hated it. It was used as a way to degrade, embarrass students. . . I said I’d never take another paddling, it’s humiliating, it’s degrading. Some teachers like to paddle students. Paddling causes you to lose respect for a person, stop listening to them.”²²

Corporal punishment also places parents and teachers in positions where they may have to choose between educational advancement and students’ physical well-being. For instance, some parents who learn that their children are being struck at public school find themselves without recourse, unable to opt-out from the practice effectively, and unable to obtain legal or other redress when their children have been paddled against their wishes. Ultimately, some parents find that the only way they can protect their children from physical harm is to withdraw them from school altogether.²³ Similarly, teachers who work in schools where corporal punishment is administered are often reluctant to send disruptive students out of the classroom because they are afraid the students will be beaten.²⁴

Moreover, a public school’s use of corporal punishment affects every student in that school, including those who are not personally subjected to hitting or paddling. Often, children who experience or witness physical violence will themselves develop disruptive and violent behaviors, further disturbing their classmates’ learning, as well as their own. This is often because students who have been subjected to corporal punishment have learned through their experiences that physical violence is an appropriate way to handle conflict.²⁵ The American Academy of Pediatrics has noted that “corporal punishment may adversely affect a student’s self-image and school achievement and it may contribute to disruptive and violent behavior.”²⁶ Twenty years of research has almost universally reached the same conclusion: physical punishment, including corporal punishment, is associated with higher levels of aggression against parents, siblings, peers and spouses.²⁷ Additionally, this research has established links between “physical punishment and child aggression, delinquency and spousal assault later in life.”²⁸

²⁰ Society for Adolescent Medicine, *Position Paper: Corporal Punishment in Schools*, 32:5 J. ADOLESCENT HEALTH 385, 388 (2003).

²¹ Joan Durrant & Ron Ensom, *Physical punishment of children: lessons from 20 years of research*, 184 CAN. MED. ASS’N J. 1373 (2012) citing Murray Straus & Mallie Paschall, *Corporal punishment by mothers and development of children’s cognitive ability: a longitudinal study of two nationally representative age cohorts*. 18 J. Aggress Maltreat Trauma, 459 459–83 (2009).

²² A VIOLENT EDUCATION, *supra* note 4, at 55 (interview with Sean D., Mississippi, Dec. 14, 2007).

²³ See IMPAIRING EDUCATION, *supra* note 3, at 6.

²⁴ See *id.* at 5.

²⁵ *Id.* at 8.

²⁶ American Academy of Pediatrics, *Committee on School Health, Corporal Punishment in Schools*, 106:2 PEDIATRICS 343 (2000), available at <http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/pediatrics;106/2/343>.

²⁷ Durant, *supra* note 21, at 1373.

²⁸ *Id.*

Despite significant evidence that corporal punishment is detrimental to a productive learning environment and children's well-being, the practice continues. **In fact, children in some states and territories receive greater protections against corporal punishment in detention facilities than they do in their public schools.**²⁹ Let me emphasize this point: children in prison have more rights and protections against physical harm than students going to our public schools. This is a disgrace. In fact, corporal punishment is considered unlawful as a punishment for crime and as a disciplinary measure in prison facilities under the provision for humane treatment of detainees in the Virgin Islands Code.³⁰

Corporal punishment violates human rights to freedom from cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment, and is contrary to respect for human dignity, a deep-seated guiding principle of human rights law enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Numerous human rights treaty bodies, including the UN Human Rights Committee, the UN Committee against Torture, and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child have spoken out against corporal punishment in schools.³¹

V. The Disproportionate Use of Corporal Punishment

While this practice is bad for all children, compounding the problem is the discriminatory application of this practice nationwide. African American students and students with disabilities are disproportionately subjected to corporal punishment, hampering their access to a supportive learning environment and increasing the likelihood of ending up in the criminal justice system – fueling what we call the school-to-prison pipeline. According to the Department of Education, while African Americans make up 17.1 percent of public school students nationwide, they

²⁹ Corporal punishment of children in juvenile justice facilities has been prohibited by the Courts of Appeals in several Federal Circuits. *See Nelson v. Heyne*, 491 F.2d 352 (7th Cir. 1974), *cert. denied* 417 U.S. 476 (padding of children in juvenile detention was a violation of the Eighth Amendment's ban on cruel and unusual punishment); *Morales v. Turman*, 562 F.2d 993, 998 (5th Cir. 1977) (corporal punishment and physical abuse in juvenile detention facilities subject to prohibition as a violation of Eighth Amendment), *rev'd on other grounds*, 535 F.2d 864 (5th Cir. 1976), *rev'd and remanded*, 430 U.S. 322 (1977). *See also Santana v. Collazo*, 533 F. Supp. 966 (D.P.R. 1982) (corporal punishment against juveniles in industrial schools and juvenile camps violates Eighth Amendment and is barred "for any reason"), *aff'd in part and vacated in part*, 714 F.2d 1172 (1st Cir. 1983), *cert. denied*, 466 U.S. 974 (1984). The American Correctional Association has also issued standards banning use of corporal punishment in juvenile facilities. *See also* Steven J. Martin, *Staff Use of Force in United States Confinement Settings*, 22 WASH. U. J.L. & POL'Y 145 (2006). In addition, corporal punishment and other harsh disciplinary practices are prohibited in publicly-funded non-medical substance abuse and long-term medical care facilities. *See, e.g.*, 42 U.S.C. § 290jj (banning corporal punishment in "non-medical community-based facilities for children and youth."); 42 C.F.R. § 483.13 (banning corporal punishment in long-term medical care facilities).

³⁰ 5 V.I.C. § 4508. *See also* Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, US Virgin Islands-Country Report, *available at* <http://www.endcorporalpunishment.org/pages/pdfs/states-reports/US%20Virgin%20Islands.pdf>.

³¹ *See* IMPAIRING EDUCATION, *supra* note 3, at 58, *citing*, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 8, para. 18; UN Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 20, Article 7, Replaces General Comment 7 Concerning Prohibition of Torture and Cruel Treatment or Punishment, UN Doc. CCPR/C/GC/20* (1992), para. 5; CAT, Report of the Committee against Torture, UN GAOR, UN Doc. A/50/44 (1995), para. 169.

accounted for 35.6 percent of those who were paddled during the 2006-2007 school year.³² Let me tell you a few stories from our research:

- One high school student described the administration of corporal punishment in her school this way: “every time you walk down the hall you see a black [child] getting whipped. I would say out of the whole school there’s only about three white [children] who have gotten paddled.”³³
- A teacher also noted: “I’ve heard this said at my school and at other schools: ‘This child should get less whips, it’ll leave marks.’ Students that are dark-skinned, it takes more to let their skin be bruised. Even with all black students, there is an imbalance: darker-skinned students get worse punishment.”³⁴

Evidence shows that students with disabilities are also disproportionately subjected to corporal punishment. In many of these cases, students were punished for exhibiting behaviors arising out of their disabilities, such as autism or Tourette’s syndrome.³⁵ The effects of corporal punishment on students with disabilities can dramatically impact their behavior and hamper their academic performance. Let me share some examples here as well:

- A parent of an autistic student commented on her child’s increase in aggression and inability to focus in school following the use of corporal punishment, stating, “When he started the school he didn’t have a discipline problem. It’s what they did to him that escalated his symptoms. He’s more aggressive now, it’s on a higher level...He was a nice quiet, calm boy...now he has these meltdowns all the time. He can’t focus, he cries.”³⁶
- A grandmother of a student who has Asperger’s syndrome withdrew him from his school in part because of the hostile environment stemming from frequent use of corporal punishment: “It made him much more introverted. He very much didn’t want to go to school . . . No one’s supposed to go to school to be tortured...”³⁷

³² CIVIL RIGHTS DATA COLLECTION, *supra* note 6. *See also* A VIOLENT EDUCATION, at 5 (“In the same year [2006-2007], in the 13 states with the highest rates of paddling, 1.4 times as many African American students were paddled as might be expected given their percentage of the student population. Although girls of all races were paddled less than boys, African American girls were nonetheless physically punished at more than twice the rate of their white counterparts in those 13 states during this period.”).

³³ A VIOLENT EDUCATION, *supra* note 4, at 72 (interview with Abrea T., Mississippi, Dec. 10, 2007).

³⁴ *Id.* at 75-76 (interview with Catherine V., Mississippi, Nov. 7, 2007).

³⁵ *See* IMPAIRING EDUCATION, *supra* note 3, at 35-40. *See also* *Corporal Punishment in Schools and Its Effect on Academic Success: Hearing Before the Subcomm. on Healthy Families and Communities of the H. Comm. on Education and Labor*, 111th Cong. (2010) (statement of the American Civil Liberties Union and Human Rights Watch).

³⁶ IMPAIRING EDUCATION, *supra* note 3, at 47 (interview with Jacquelyn K., Mississippi, April 14, 2009).

³⁷ *Id.* at 44 (interview with Sarah P., Oklahoma, May 22, 2009).

VI. Federal Legislation Banning Corporal Punishment

A prohibition on corporal punishment in public schools in the Virgin Islands and nationwide is necessary. As context, I would like to give you some background on the current federal bill we are working on, the Ending Corporal Punishment in Schools Act, led by Representative McCarthy.³⁸ In particular the bill would ban corporal punishment in public schools and private schools which serve students receiving federal services; institute a national assessment to be carried out by the Secretary of Education to determine compliance with the act and to identify best practices, including training models that emphasize positive behavior supports; and create a grant program, in which the Secretary may award grants to state and territory educational agencies to improve school climate and implement school-wide positive behavior support approaches. This legislation would apply to all states and territories, including the U.S. Virgin Islands.

I, along with the President of the American Federation of Teachers, Randi Weingarten had the honor to stand with Representative McCarthy at her press conference when she introduced the bill in 2010. In voicing support for the bill, the President of the AFT stated: “Corporal punishment doesn't improve behavior or student performance. Rep. McCarthy's bill would end an outdated disciplinary practice.”³⁹ In addition, this federal legislation is supported by over sixty organizations and coalitions, representing hundreds of groups, including, the National Education Association, the National Parent Teacher Association, and the National Association of Secondary School Principals.⁴⁰

VII. Virgin Islands' Legislation Banning Corporal Punishment in Public Schools: Bill No. 30-0136

However, until a federal ban on corporal punishment can be achieved, it is imperative that states and territories continue to take the lead in bringing an end to this form of discipline. We applaud this Committee's consideration of Bill No. 30-0136 banning the use of corporal punishment in public schools in the Virgin Islands. This bill would be an important step forward and would make the Virgin Islands a model for states that have not taken action. The bill recognizes the physical, emotional, academic, and human rights impact of corporal punishment and acknowledges the world-wide movement to ban the barbaric practice.

The bill bans corporal punishment in most circumstances. We think that exceptions must be as narrow as possible. I understand that an amendment has been submitted that would remove the protection of property from the list of exceptions. This is an important amendment to the legislation.

³⁸ The Ending Corporal Punishment in Schools Act applies to all states and territories, including the U.S. Virgin Islands that accept grant funds under the General Education Provisions Act (20 U.S.C. §§ 1232f et seq.).

³⁹ Press Release, Congresswoman Carolyn McCarthy, Congresswoman Carolyn McCarthy Introduces Legislation to End Corporal Punishment in Schools (June 29, 2010), *available at* <http://carolynmccarthy.house.gov/recent-news/congresswoman-carolyn-mccarthy-introduces-legislation-to-end-corporal-punishment-in-schools/>.

⁴⁰ Letter from American Civil Liberties Union, et al. to Representative Carolyn McCarthy (June 28, 2010), *available at* <https://www.aclu.org/human-rights-racial-justice/sign-letter-supporting-ending-corporal-punishment-schools-act>.

We commend the inclusion of a Safe Havens provision, which recognizes that schools should be free from fear to allow students the best opportunity to succeed. Should this bill become law, the Board of Education, as part of the comprehensive discipline policy, should include positive behavioral supports as an alternative disciplinary practice.

VIII. Positive Behavioral Supports: An Alternative to Corporal Punishment

An evidence-based approach to school discipline, like PBS, allows schools to target problematic behavior proactively and develop approaches that can improve school climate and academic outcomes by reducing school discipline referrals.⁴¹ Examples of successful PBS programs, include integrating conflict resolution and cultural awareness into curricula,⁴² mediation, counseling and team interventions, and training, resources and monitoring to ensure implementation of positive discipline practices and policies.⁴³ More than 18,000 schools across the country are implementing PBS – resulting in significant reductions in the behaviors that lead to disciplinary referrals, suspensions, and expulsions.⁴⁴

On the federal level, another important piece of legislation, the Positive Behavior for Safe and Effective Schools Act, would help states and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) create positive learning environments by allowing them to use Title I Department of Education funds to develop PBS practices.⁴⁵ This bill would also require the Department of Education to provide assistance and support to the states and territories. Until this federal legislation is passed, similar state legislation providing funding and support for PBS programs would be beneficial for the Virgin Islands.

IX. Recommendations

Finally, in order to prevent the continued use of violence against children in our schools, we recommend the Committee:

- support Bill No. 30-0136, with the accompanying amendment striking the words “or property,” and

⁴¹ See, e.g., Stephen P. Safran & Karen Oswald, *Positive Behavior Supports: Can Schools Reshape Disciplinary Practices?*, 69:3 EXCEPTIONAL CHILD. 361 (2003), available at <http://www.casenex.com/casenex/cecReadings/positiveBehavior.pdf>; Deborah J. Vagins, *An Arcane, Destructive—and Still Legal—Practice (Blog)*, HUFFINGTON POST, June 30, 2010, available at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/deborah-j-vagins/an-arcane-destructive_b_631417.html.

⁴² *Ending the School-to-Prison Pipeline: Hearing Before the Subcomm. on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Human Rights of the H. Comm. on the Judiciary*, 112th Cong. (2012), (statement of the American Civil Liberties Union), available at https://www.aclu.org/files/assets/aclu_statement_for_sjc_subcomm_hearing_on_the_school_to_prison_pipeline_12_2012.pdf.

⁴³ Dignity In Schools, *A Model Code on Education and Dignity* (2012), available at http://www.dignityinschools.org/files/DSC_Model_Code.pdf.

⁴⁴ Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports, <http://www.pbis.org/> (last visited Oct. 4, 2013).

⁴⁵ Positive Behavior for Safe and Effective Schools Act, H.R. 3165 112th Cong. (2011).

- promote the use of, and training in, positive behavioral supports, so that teachers may effectively create safe and supportive school discipline plans.

X. Conclusion

On behalf of the ACLU, I would like to thank Chairman Cole and the Committee for allowing me to testify today. The use of violence against students is never an acceptable means of punishment – it harms students physically, psychologically and academically. Senator Buckley’s bill could help to ensure that the territory’s children are able to achieve their full educational potential in a supportive learning environment. Thank you for your time and I am happy to answer any questions.