

Stop Paddling in Schools

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www.heraldnet.com/article/20120509/OPINION01/705099963



We obviously haven't kept up on our homework. Who knew some states still allowed "corporal punishment" in our public schools?

Such punishment typically consists of "swats on the backside of a student with a wooden paddle," USA Today reported. Interesting, since such action is considered an assault in any and all other circumstances. Except for the leeway given to parents to discipline their children this way, as long as they don't leave lasting physical injuries.

Nineteen states, mostly in the South, with exception of our neighbor Idaho, still allow "paddling," which disingenuously sounds restful and peaceful, like canoeing.

Federal legislation to end physical punishment in our schools, has stalled, as have similar measures in multiple statehouses, USA Today reported. Is it just tradition, a misguided "state's rights" issue, or is there a powerful corporal punishment lobby?

Among the unconscionable problems with corporal punishment: Racial discrimination. The U.S. Education Department found that African-American students are twice as likely to be spanked as their peers of other races, USA Today reported. In North Carolina, Native Americans represent 2 percent of the student population yet make up 35 percent of those physically punished, The American Academy of Pediatrics concluded years ago that spanking harms learning and self-image, the paper reported.

The opposing view, written by Kenneth T. Whalum Jr., a member of the Memphis school board, rejects the idea that "violence that begets violence," or that it affects minorities disproportionately, or that it's an outdated mode of discipline. ("The truth of the matter is that there is an equal number of such studies that find the exact opposite," Whalum Jr. writes, but cites not a single study.)

The biggest problem, he argues, is that most people think corporal punishment is a "beating," when in reality, "properly defined, corporal punishment simply means 'physical' punishment, or the intentional infliction of pain as a means of discouraging unacceptable behavior, while encouraging acceptable behavior."

Most people understand that it's the "intentional infliction of pain" that is the problem, whether you call it a "beating" or a "paddling."

In this age of child abuse, bullying and violence, it's incomprehensible that this is still a matter of debate when it comes to the behavior of our public schools personnel.

It's time for the majority of states to unite and stand up for the minors living in the 19 states where it's legal for school officials to intentionally inflict pain on students in the name of discipline.

Join child advocates at the HR 3027 campaign-rally, Wash DC, June 20-22, 2012: www.nospank.net/dcflyer.htm

Review HR 3027: www.thehittingstopshere.com/McCarthyNewsBillPSA.pdf

The Board Of Education Documentary Trailer on USA school corporal punishment & petition for US federal ban, by Jared Abrams, filmmaker: <http://www.change.org/petitions/support-h-r-3027-to-end-corporal-punishment-in-us-public-schools>

Learn more: www.NoSpank.net, www.PositiveDiscipline.com & www.TheHittingStopsHere.com