

Mississippi Coalition to End Corporal Punishment



Letter of Support from The Mississippi Coalition to End Corporal Punishment led and facilitated by Nollie Jenkins Family Center, Inc & the undersigned allied organizations.

TO: Local School Districts, State Educational Agencies, and Policymakers at all levels:

On behalf of the **Mississippi Coalition to End Corporal Punishment** and the undersigned allied organizations, we call on local, state, and federal policymakers to address the traumatic use of corporal punishment in schools. We all agree that schools should be safe learning environments and should be places where students and educators interact in positive ways that foster student growth and dignity.

Nollie Jenkins Family Center began the Campaign to Eliminate Corporal Punishment in 2012 with students, organizers and parents, by conducting interviews, student journaling, one-on-ones, petition drives and presentations to the Holmes County Consolidated School District. Since that time, **NJFC has been joined by other organizations across Mississippi, Tennessee and the southeastern region, who believe that** public schools are crucial places for nurturing the unique gifts of all children and developing the knowledge and skills they need to grow and thrive. To fulfill this mission of promoting the positive development of our youth, schools must first ensure that no harm occurs to the children and young people entrusted in their care.

According to recent Civil Rights Data Collection, Mississippi has the highest corporal punishment rate in the country and is responsible for almost one-quarter of all corporal punishment in the USA.

The use of corporal punishment can hinder the creation of a positive school climate by focusing on punitive discipline to address student misbehavior rather than interventions that encourage positive behavior and healthy student development. Corporal punishment also teaches students that physical force is an acceptable means of solving problems which undermines efforts to promote nonviolent techniques for conflict resolution.

The time is long overdue for us to rethink how to create positive school climates and improve disciplinary practices in our schools. We support local, state, and federal policy and legislative actions to end corporal punishment in schools, including the reintroduction of the federal legislation “**Protecting Our Students in Schools Act**,” that focuses on banning corporal punishment in schools as well as promoting positive and effective disciplinary practices.

Specifically, the bill:

- Prohibits the practice of corporal punishment in any school that receives federal funding;
- Establishes numerous enforcement protections, including a private right of action, the involvement of the attorney general and the Office for Civil Rights, and a series of rigorous reporting requirements for states and school districts; and
- Invests in states and school districts by establishing a grant program to improve school climate and culture by implementing positive, proactive measures, including positive behavioral interventions and supports, trauma-informed care, restorative justice interventions, implicit bias training, multi-tiered system of supports, culturally responsive teaching, and more to reduce exclusionary and aversive discipline practices.

The Mississippi Coalition to End Corporal Punishment is urging school districts and policy makers to not only eliminate corporal punishment--which is harmful, ineffective, and often disproportionately administered to students of color and students with disabilities--but to implement effective discipline that includes peer mediation, conflict resolution, restorative justice, scholars of peace programming, Saturday school, and community service learning.

By signing on, your organization is supporting **The Mississippi Coalition’s work to end corporal punishment** in schools and supporting the reintroduction of the Protecting our Students Act of 2021.

Name

Organization

Organization Website