

AN URGENT MESSAGE TO THE PRESIDENT

Dear President Obama,

We are writing to alert you to a gross and unconscionable violation of schoolchildren's fundamental human rights. The practice to which we refer is universally condemned by recognized leaders in the fields of pedagogy and psychology. Nevertheless, it is widespread, and those with the authority to correct it either are unaware of the problem, or pretend to be unaware.

The United States is the only Western industrialized democracy that permits schoolchildren to be punished by being battered on the buttocks with a wooden board. This practice, known as "paddling," is legal in 21 states, and occurs approximately 1/4 million

times per year. Such blatant child abuse has many well-documented negative effects, and no benefits. It is one of the causes of the high rate of drop-out that afflicts public schools in paddling states. It promotes violence by modeling violence. It signals its users' incompetence. The time is past due for all educators to be held to a higher standard of professionalism -- one that guarantees a safe, nurturing, violence-free environment to every schoolchild.

We, the undersigned, demand the immediate abolition of educators' right to assault and batter children in their care.

NAME (Print)	SIGNATURE	CITY	STATE

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