FRANCE BECOMES 56TH COUNTRY TO BAN CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

July 2019

French lawmakers have passed a bill prohibiting parents from using corporal punishment to correct their child's behavior. In France, it is estimated that 85% of parents use corporal punishment, with 75% of confirmed physical child abuse cases there being the result of corporal punishment.

Prior to passing this bill, a French charity produced public service announcements promoting the legislation prohibiting corporal punishment.

The bill also requires mayors to tell couples at civil weddings that physical and psychological violence against children is against the law.

The French government gave final approval to the law on Tuesday, July 2. There is no punishment for parents who break the law.
Jamaica has also begun moving toward banning the corporal punishment of children. In an interview for the Miami Herald (July, 2019) Jamaica’s prime minister, Andrew Holness, stated that he believes there is a correlation between the pervasive, almost ubiquitous use of very violent corporal punishment and beatings by Jamaican parents and teachers, and the country’s high prevalence of violent crimes, even murder. Between Jan. 1 and July 13, 2018, there were 1,911 violent crimes including 722 homicides, according to Jamaican police statistics. Jamaica’s homicide rate in 2018 was three times higher than the average for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Maureen Samms-Vaughan, a child development and behavior specialist at the University of the West Indies, is also calling for the cessation of corporal punishment in both homes and schools in Jamaica, citing her research and that of her colleague, Herbert Gayle, which argues that severe beatings of boys by their mothers is directly related to their criminal behavior later in life.

Both Holness and Samms-Vaughan acknowledge the fact that corporal punishment and beatings of Jamaican children are rooted in the legacy of slavery. They recognize that there needs to be coordinated public education regarding this, as well as normal developmental expectations (e.g., how long a child can be expected to sit still), and the harmful effects of corporal punishment. Another challenge they acknowledge is that many Jamaican parents state, “I was beaten and I’m fine”, and refer to the Bible – stating that Proverbs 13:24 says “Spare the rod, spoil the child”. Nevertheless, both are committed to working hard toward changing social norms with the ultimate goal of stopping violence toward children.

---

**Progress in Mississippi**

By Mahi Senthilkumar

House Bill 1182, passed on July 1, 2019, prohibits the use of corporal punishment to discipline students with disabilities in Mississippi public schools. Given recent findings by researchers (see page 3), this is a monumental step in the right direction. Hundreds of children will now be safer and better-equipped to thrive in their schools thanks to this legislative action, which was supported by attorneys for the Children’s Rights group at the Southern Poverty Law Center.
The National No Hit Zone Committee has been working diligently to educate and invite others to implement a No Hit Zone in their facility.

The chair of the committee is Stacie Schrieffe LeBlanc, MEd, JD. She is also the President-elect of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children, and is a member of the Executive Committee, National Initiative to End Corporal Punishment (NIECP). I interviewed Ms. LeBlanc for this newsletter.

**Ellen Chiocca:** What was the impetus for forming the National No Hit Zone Committee?

**Stacie Schrieffe LeBlanc:** The impetus for forming the National No Hit Zone Committee arose as part of the strategic plan for the National Initiative to End Corporal Punishment. The committee discussed the need for a more structured plan, i.e., policies, training materials and signage to help those interested in implementing a No Hit Zone.

**EC:** What have you found to be the main point of reluctance for hospitals, clinics, or private providers to implement a No Hit Zone?

**SSL:** The first hurdle is getting administrators to commit. The second issue is getting signage. Those are the biggest barriers that we have encountered, and we have folks that can help with the first. Funding for signage and in-person training that achieves engagement is likely the biggest burden that over arches both issues. Hence it comes back to funding.

**EC:** What would your best advice be to staff when they are trying to implement a No Hit Zone or have mixed opinion?

**SSL:** Get a policy signed that puts the commitment into writing.

Check out the National No Hit Zone Committee website [here](#).

---

**Southern Poverty Law Center Report on Corporal Punishment in Schools**

On June 19, 2019, the Southern Poverty Law Center published a report entitled, *The Striking Outlier: The Persistent, Painful, and Problematic Practice of Corporal Punishment in Schools.* This report reiterated the fact that in 19 states, it is still lawful to hit children. The main findings of this report are as follows:

Four states -- Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas and Texas—account for more than 70 percent of the documented instances of corporal punishment. Mississippi alone is responsible for almost 25% of all corporal punishment episodes in schools.

Black boys are about twice as likely to receive corporal punishment as white boys, and black girls are three times as likely as white girls.

Students with disabilities are hit at a higher rate than those without disabilities.

---

**Hopeful Changes in Popular Culture**

One necessary step in banning the use of corporal punishment in the United States is to change social norms. One promising step in this direction was evidenced by the American weekly magazine, People, in which television star Ryan Michelle Bathe, 42, published an essay about her experiences as a child with various types of physical punishment, how this made her feel, and why she vows never to hit her two sons, ages 3 and 8 years. Ms. Bathe states in her essay that it was not just her personal experiences with violence as a child that influenced her decision, but she educated herself regarding the research regarding the negative effects of corporal punishment. Ms. Bathe’s husband, the actor Sterling K. Brown has stated that he also opposes the use of corporal punishment.

Ms. Bathe’s essay can be read at [People.com](#).
Partner Organizations
American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children
Alison Smith Coaching
Attachment Parenting International
Center for the Human Rights of Children
Connective Parenting
The N.Y. Foundling
Positive Discipline Community Resources
ThePresentMother
Priceless Parenting
Tennesseans for NonViolent School Discipline

Murray A. Straus Founding Ambassadors
Ruth Beaglehole
David Corwin, M.D.
George Davis, M.D.
Madeleine Gomez, Ph.D.
George Holden, Ph.D.

Karen A. Polonko Founding Ambassadors
Stacie Schrieffler Leblanc, M.Ed., J.D.
Lucien Lombardo, Ph.D.
Deborah Sendek
Len Sendek
Laura Strom, MS, LMFT, LPCC
Viola Vaughan-Eden, Ph.D.

Irwin A. Hyman Founding Ambassadors
Elizabeth Gershoff, Ph.D.
Lella Holland
Kim Hopkins
Jennifer Kline
Mary LeLuca
Mary Anne McCaffree, M.D.
Mel Schneiderman, Ph.D.
Cathy Taylor, Ph.D.
Nicole Vanderheiden

Thank you to our generous partners, ambassadors, and members. Your support helps us help kids.

Find us online!

www.endhitting.org

More Websites to Check out:
Stop Spanking | http://stopspanking.org/
Parenting Beyond Punishment | https://parentingbeyondpunishment.com