

August xx, 2014

The Honorable
U.S. House of Representatives
House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

We, the undersigned, representing hundreds of thousands of Americans, want to encourage you to cosponsor H.R. 4989, "Justina's Law." This bipartisan bill, if passed, will provide additional and necessary protection to children who are wards of the state, most notably foster children, from being used in dangerous medical research that doesn't present a greater than minimal prospect of direct benefit to the child.

Inspired by the case of Justina Pelletier, the now sixteen-year-old girl who was a ward of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for sixteen months after her parents received conflicting medical diagnoses from two nationally respected research hospitals, Justina's Law is the first step in ensuring that the abuse suffered by Justina Pelletier will not happen to any other child. Currently, research hospitals across the country have policies in place that allow for medical research to take place on children, even when that **research presents a greater than minimal risk with minimal or no prospect of direct benefit**. Perhaps even more deplorable, these dangerous research projects being conducted on children are paid for, in large part, through NIH grants.

H.R. 4989 will prohibit the federal government from funding medical research projects on children if the medical research project **presents a greater than minimal risk with minimal or no prospect of direct benefit**. It is important to note that this prohibition on funding will not, in any way, impede funding for medical research projects that (1) do not present a greater than minimal risk of harm, or (2) do present a greater than minimal risk of harm but offer a greater than minimal prospect of direct benefit for the child. As such, this bill will increase the quality of medical care that foster children, and other children who are wards of the state, receive by requiring that their medical treatment be directed for their benefit.

As a result of Justina's courage to speak out against the abusive treatment that she received while a ward of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, other families are now sharing their stories too. As a result, we have learned that the case of Justina Pelletier is not an isolated incident. The heartbreaking reality is that foster children, in virtually every state, are being targeted and used for dangerous medical research. The medical mistreatment of foster children is a nationwide problem that necessitates a congressional response.

These are children, not subjects for experimentation. This is a matter of basic human dignity, parental rights, and equality. Thank you in advance for cosponsoring H.R. 4989, "Justina's Law," and in doing so, taking a stand for the rights and protections of foster children.

Respectfully,

Mathew Staver
Chairman
Liberty Counsel Action

***To sign onto this coalition letter, please email Mark Trammell, metrammell@liberty.edu, with your name, job title, and organization by COB Wednesday, August 6th.**