



July 17, 2008

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Arlen Specter
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Leahy and Ranking Member Specter:

The American Psychological Association (APA) urges you to voice your concerns today in the markup of S. 3155 to protect the integrity of the peer review process from personal, anecdotal, or political information that may inappropriately influence decision-making. Funding decisions for competitive research grants should be based primarily on the recommendations of expert panels in a peer review process. It is crucial that the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Reauthorization Act of 2008 clarify the need for objective and scientific evaluation of grant proposals, which would ensure that the most effective programs are funded. As we recommended to the Committee prior to the bill's introduction, inserting the words "*expert-panel peer review*" into PL 93-415, TITLE 42, CHAPTER 72, SUBCHAPTER II, Part D, § 5661 (c) following the word "competitive" would help to clarify this important process.

Despite concerns regarding the competitive grant making process, APA's 148,000 members and affiliates would like to express their support of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Reauthorization Act of 2008. APA is the largest scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States and is the world's largest association of psychologists. Comprising researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants, and graduate students, APA works to advance psychology as a science, profession, and means of promoting health, education and human welfare.

APA would like to thank you for your leadership and commitment to juvenile justice issues. We will be providing you with additional comments on S.3155 in the coming weeks, and we look forward to the improvements that this reauthorization would make to the current law. Should you have any questions, please contact Anne Bettesworth at abettesworth@apa.org or at (202) 336-6182.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven Breckler".

Steven Breckler
Executive Director for Science

CC: Senate Judiciary Committee Members