



“On the Alert”

I'd like to tell you about an area of concern to families in Illinois. This is especially important, because it looks like just a matter of time until this issue reaches your state.

In April 2002, an Executive Order from President Bush established the New Freedom Commission to determine how to better help adults with mental illness and children with emotional disturbance to “live, work, learn and participate fully in their communities.”

That goal may sound reasonable. But last summer, CWA's long-time Illinois Associate State Director Karen Hayes learned about state legislation that goes far beyond the President's Executive Order. As a mother of six and former local school-board member, Karen read the plan for her state with special interest.

She learned that the Illinois General Assembly had passed a 2003 law, signed by the governor, that calls for all pregnant women and all children through age 18 to be screened for mental health issues. It also requires school districts to include social and emotional learning in curricula, and for the state board of education to adopt state standards.

“My biggest concerns involve the inappropriate role of government screening citizens for mental health, the lack of parental consent and the unprecedented expansion of our schools' role,” Karen says. “No wonder children leave public schools unable to read or write.”

CWA of Illinois researched the plan and jumped into action. Karen testified at a public forum and CWA of Illinois issued a press release. Illinois members contacted their legislators and met with other pro-family leaders to strategize how to deal with the new law.

They are concerned that children will be mislabeled and unnecessarily prescribed serious psychiatric medications. “The pharmaceutical companies stand to gain a lot,” Karen notes.

In the meantime, keep alert in your state. According to the National Mental Health Information Center, a program of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, “All states are moving toward implementation.”

It is not beneficial to children—or to taxpayers—for government bureaucracies to set mental health standards. As CWA of Illinois is showing so well, this is another opportunity for citizens to act.

Thank you for all you do to stand up for the family!



Karen Hayes
Illinois Associate
State Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Beverly LaHaye".

Beverly LaHaye
Founder and Chairman