

109<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

# H. R. 6425

To amend the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 to improve the health and well-being of maltreated infants and toddlers through the creation of a National Court Teams Resource Center, to assist local Court Teams, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 8, 2006

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN (for herself, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. FORTUÑO, Mr. KILDEE, and Mrs. SCHMIDT) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and the Workforce

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## A BILL

To amend the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 to improve the health and well-being of maltreated infants and toddlers through the creation of a National Court Teams Resource Center, to assist local Court Teams, and for other purposes.

1        *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2        *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3        **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4        This Act may be cited as the “Safe Babies Act of  
5        2006”.

6        **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7        The Congress finds as follows:

1           (1) Children three years of age and younger  
2           have the highest rates of victimization. Infants and  
3           toddlers are twice as likely as all other children to  
4           become victims of child maltreatment. Children ages  
5           three and younger are also 32 percent more likely to  
6           be placed in foster care than children ages four to  
7           eleven. Once placed in foster care, children three  
8           years of age and younger are more likely than older  
9           children to be abused and neglected, and they tend  
10          to stay in foster care longer than older children.

11          (2) Infants and toddlers are the most vulner-  
12          able to the effects of maltreatment. Research shows  
13          that young children who have experienced physical  
14          abuse have lower social competence, show less empa-  
15          thy for others, and have difficulty recognizing oth-  
16          ers' emotions. They are also more likely than chil-  
17          dren who have not been maltreated to have deficits  
18          in IQ scores, language ability, and school perform-  
19          ance.

20          (3) Research shows that the human brain has  
21          achieved 80 to 85 percent of its adult size by the age  
22          of three. During those early years, the brain is de-  
23          veloping the vast majority of its basic capacity, the  
24          development of which can determine future achieve-  
25          ment or failure. Therefore, infants and toddlers in

1 foster care are spending the most critical develop-  
2 mental period in situations that may be detrimental  
3 to healthy growth and development.

4 (4) Children under the age of four account for  
5 81 percent of child fatalities, and children under the  
6 age of one account for 45 percent of such fatalities.

7 (5) A rapidly spreading epidemic of meth-  
8 amphetamine use is overwhelming child welfare sys-  
9 tems in many States. Iowa is one of the States most  
10 ravaged by the methamphetamine epidemic, and it  
11 has the third highest rate of per capita methamphet-  
12 amine treatment admissions in the Nation. In Iowa  
13 in 2004, the rate of maltreatment for infants and  
14 toddlers was 32.3 per 1,000 children, twice the na-  
15 tional average of 16.1 per 1,000 children.

16 (6) Child welfare systems are not meeting the  
17 needs of the children who rely on public intervention  
18 to protect them. In the Child and Family Service  
19 Reviews for fiscal years 2003 and 2004, the Admin-  
20 istration for Children and Families revealed that, of  
21 19 States studied for performance on Child and  
22 Family Services Review indicators, none of the  
23 States achieved all of the specified outcomes, and all  
24 of the States failed to meet the outcome related to

1 the provision of physical and mental health services  
2 to children in foster care.

3 (7) Judges can be powerful catalysts for change  
4 in the way communities address the needs of mal-  
5 treated infants and toddlers. A groundbreaking  
6 project in the Juvenile Division of the Eleventh Ju-  
7 dicial Circuit of Florida has combined the leadership  
8 of a family court judge with expertise in early child-  
9 hood development. This ground breaking collabora-  
10 tion is ensuring that infants and toddlers receive the  
11 services they need. Mental health and parenting  
12 intervention services are provided for parents and  
13 children together. Initial results are promising in  
14 terms of eliminating further abuse and neglect and  
15 promoting safety and well-being through timely per-  
16 manent placements.

17 **SEC. 3. COURT TEAMS.**

18 Title II of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Pre-  
19 vention Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5611 et seq.) is amend-  
20 ed—

21 (1) by redesignating part F as part G; and

22 (2) by inserting after part E the following new  
23 part:

**“PART F—COURT TEAMS****2 “SEC. 271. COURT TEAMS PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.**

3 “(a) GRANT AUTHORIZED.—The Administrator shall  
4 award a grant to a national early childhood development  
5 organization to—

6 “(1) establish a National Court Teams Re-  
7 source Center to—

8 “(A) promote the well-being of maltreated  
9 infants and toddlers and their families (includ-  
10 ing the special problems created by substance  
11 abuse, particularly methamphetamine abuse);

12 “(B) help prevent the recurrence of abuse  
13 and neglect of children; and

14 “(C) promote timely reunification of fami-  
15 lies or other successful permanency outcomes  
16 for maltreated infants and toddlers in foster  
17 care; and

18 “(2) select, and provide assistance to, local  
19 Court Teams created to achieve the goals described  
20 in paragraph (1).

21 “(b) GRANT DURATION.—The grant awarded under  
22 this part shall be for a period of 5 years, and shall be  
23 renewable at the discretion of the Administrator.

1 **“SEC. 272. ELIGIBILITY; APPLICATION; SELECTION OF**  
2 **GRANTEE.**

3 “(a) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to receive the grant  
4 described in section 271, an entity shall be a national early  
5 childhood development organization, as defined in section  
6 276, that has—

7 “(1) specific expertise in the development of in-  
8 fants and toddlers;

9 “(2) experience in incorporating the expertise  
10 described in paragraph (1) into the judicial system  
11 to promote change in the way courts address cases  
12 involving maltreated infants and toddlers in foster  
13 care; and

14 “(3) the capacity—

15 “(A) to establish and maintain the Na-  
16 tional Court Teams Resource Center described  
17 in section 273; and

18 “(B) to support the implementation and  
19 activities of local Court Teams by providing the  
20 assistance required under this part.

21 “(b) APPLICATION.—An entity desiring to receive the  
22 grant described in section 271 shall submit an application  
23 to the Administrator, at such time, in such manner, and  
24 containing such information as the Administrator may re-  
25 quire. Such application shall—

1           “(1) describe the expertise of the entity in in-  
2           fant and toddler development, including any experi-  
3           ence relevant to the ability of the entity to oversee  
4           the implementation of local Court Teams, and the  
5           capacity of the entity to provide assistance to local  
6           Court Teams;

7           “(2) include a detailed plan describing how the  
8           entity will establish and maintain the National Court  
9           Teams Resource Center, and how the entity will  
10          carry out the activities of such Center, as described  
11          in section 273; and

12          “(3) explain the process the entity will use to  
13          select local Court Teams to receive assistance under  
14          this part, including an assurance that the entity will  
15          give priority to applications that—

16                  “(A) demonstrate the commitment of—

17                          “(i) at least one qualified judge to  
18                          lead the local Court Team and serve as Ju-  
19                          dicial Leader of the Court Team; and

20                          “(ii) community agencies serving mal-  
21                          treated infants and toddlers and their fam-  
22                          ilies in such jurisdiction to participate in  
23                          the local Court Team;

24                  “(B) describe the population of maltreated  
25          infants and toddlers in the community within

1 the jurisdiction of the court over which the  
2 qualified judge presides, including—

3 “(i) any problems contributing to the  
4 placement of maltreated infants and tod-  
5 dlers under the supervision of the court  
6 (including the impact of parental substance  
7 abuse, and particularly methamphetamine  
8 abuse); and

9 “(ii) any challenges faced by the court  
10 in making decisions that are in the best in-  
11 terests of such maltreated infants and tod-  
12 dlers;

13 “(C) describe how the local Court Team  
14 will carry out the activities required under sec-  
15 tion 274; and

16 “(4) demonstrate the ability to meet the all se-  
17 lection criteria, including—

18 “(A) special expertise in the developmental  
19 needs of children three years of age and young-  
20 er;

21 “(B) a demonstrated record of providing  
22 resources to parents and other caregivers re-  
23 garding the healthy growth and development of  
24 their children;

1           “(C) a demonstrated record of providing  
2 resources for practitioners in the fields of child  
3 development, early child care and education,  
4 family support, pediatrics, child welfare, and  
5 mental health;

6           “(D) extensive knowledge about how expo-  
7 sure to violence (including domestic violence,  
8 community violence, and child maltreatment)  
9 influences the growth and development of in-  
10 fants and toddlers;

11           “(E) a documented history of collaboration  
12 with public and private sector groups working  
13 to improve the lives of maltreated infants and  
14 toddlers, including collaboration with judges at  
15 the local level;

16           “(F) the capacity to analyze child welfare  
17 policy at the local, State, and national levels  
18 and to offer research-based solutions to the  
19 problems confronting child welfare systems  
20 across the country;

21           “(G) the ability to manage multiple com-  
22 plex national resource centers and related ac-  
23 tivities, including strategic planning, team  
24 building, infrastructure development, training  
25 for multidisciplinary professionals at all levels,

1 materials development for multiple audiences in  
2 a variety of formats, and conference planning  
3 and delivery at the local, State, regional, and  
4 national levels; and

5 “(5) include any other information the Adminis-  
6 trator may require, including any assurance required  
7 by the Administrator that the entity, if selected, will  
8 give special consideration to applications that have a  
9 significant number of child welfare cases in the ju-  
10 risdiction of the court over which the qualified judge  
11 presides in which substance abuse, and particularly  
12 methamphetamine abuse, is involved.

13 “(c) SELECTION OF GRANTEE.—In considering grant  
14 applications under this part, the Administrator shall select  
15 the national early childhood development organization that  
16 demonstrates—

17 “(1) the greatest ability to satisfy the criteria  
18 described in subsection (b)(4); and

19 “(2) the most extensive experience in address-  
20 ing the needs of abused and maltreated infants and  
21 toddlers through training and technical assistance  
22 provided to judges, multidisciplinary professionals  
23 and community leaders.

1 **“SEC. 273. NATIONAL COURT TEAMS RESOURCE CENTER.**

2       “(a) GENERAL ACTIVITIES.—The national early  
3 childhood development organization receiving the grant  
4 authorized under section 271 shall establish and maintain  
5 a National Court Teams Resource Center, which shall  
6 carry out the following activities:

7               “(1) Develop a process for selecting, and select,  
8 local Court Teams to receive assistance under this  
9 part.

10               “(2) Develop materials to guide qualified judges  
11 in the decision-making process regarding maltreated  
12 infants and toddlers, and to train members of local  
13 Court Teams and others in the community regarding  
14 the appropriate care of maltreated infants and tod-  
15 dlers, including the importance of—

16                       “(A) stable foster care placements;

17                       “(B) frequent parent-child visitation;

18                       “(C) reduction of the recurrence of abuse  
19 and neglect;

20                       “(D) improving health and well-being; and

21                       “(E) timely permanent placement.

22               “(3) Conduct national meetings and training  
23 sessions for local Court Teams.

24               “(4) Develop a database that shall be—

25                       “(A) available to each local Court Team to  
26 track such Court Team’s progress; and

1           “(B) used by the National Court Teams  
2           Resource Center to facilitate evaluation of the  
3           local Court Teams receiving assistance under  
4           this part.

5           “(5) Provide information to communities and  
6           courts around the country seeking to adopt the  
7           Court Teams approach, including information re-  
8           lated to—

9           “(A) the incorporation of knowledge about  
10          infant and toddler development into the resolu-  
11          tion of cases by judges with jurisdiction over  
12          children in foster care; and

13          “(B) methods to change State and local  
14          government systems for addressing the needs of  
15          infants and toddlers in the foster care, and  
16          their families.

17          “(6) Any other activity necessary to provide the  
18          assistance required under subsection (b).

19          “(b) ASSISTANCE TO LOCAL COURT TEAMS.—Assist-  
20          ance provided to local Court Teams by the National Court  
21          Teams Resource Center shall include—

22          “(1) providing direction, coordination, and over-  
23          sight of the implementation of local Court Teams, as  
24          needed;

1           “(2) providing a Local Community Coordinator  
2 for each local Court Team, who shall—

3           “(A) be selected by the National Court  
4 Teams Resource Center after consultation with  
5 the Judicial Leader of the local Court Team;

6           “(B) serve as a resource of child develop-  
7 ment expertise for the local Court Team; and

8           “(C) promote coordination (in the jurisdic-  
9 tion of the court over which the Judicial Leader  
10 presides) between—

11           “(i) community agencies that serve  
12 children; and

13           “(ii) providers of resources to support  
14 maltreated infants and toddlers; and

15           “(3) providing training and technical assistance  
16 to local Court Teams, including—

17           “(A) individual consultation on site,  
18 through telephone conversations, and through  
19 responses to emailed information requests;

20           “(B) networking assistance and facilitation  
21 of telephone conference calls among Judicial  
22 Leaders and local Court Team members in dif-  
23 ferent jurisdictions to discuss issues of common  
24 concern;

1           “(C) development and dissemination of  
2 training materials, including fact sheets, tem-  
3 plate forms, and sample operational materials  
4 developed by local Court Teams; and

5           “(D) training for local Court Teams re-  
6 lated to—

7                 “(i) the impact of abuse and neglect  
8 on infants and toddlers;

9                 “(ii) improved decision-making by  
10 courts regarding maltreated infants and  
11 toddlers to reduce the recurrence of abuse  
12 and neglect and improve developmental  
13 outcomes; and

14           “(4) organizing local training for community  
15 members of jurisdictions in which local Court Teams  
16 are located, which shall relate to the particular needs  
17 of infants and toddlers exposed to maltreatment and  
18 trauma, including topics such as—

19                 “(A) general infant and toddler develop-  
20 ment;

21                 “(B) the impact of abuse and neglect on  
22 development;

23                 “(C) a relationship-based mental health  
24 intervention model for parents and children to-  
25 gether;

1 “(D) best-practices in family interactions;

2 “(E) evidence-based parenting interven-  
3 tions; and

4 “(F) services available to foster children in  
5 the community.

6 **“SEC. 274. LOCAL COURT TEAMS.**

7 “(a) APPLICATION.—An entity desiring to receive the  
8 assistance for local Court Teams made available under  
9 this part shall submit an application to the National Court  
10 Teams Resource Center at such time, in such manner, and  
11 containing such information as the National Court Teams  
12 Resource Center may require.

13 “(b) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to receive assist-  
14 ance under this part, a local Court Team shall be com-  
15 prised of—

16 “(1) a Judicial Leader, who shall be a qualified  
17 judge, and who shall lead and oversee the implemen-  
18 tation and ongoing activities of the local Court  
19 Team;

20 “(2) a Local Community Coordinator, selected  
21 and provided by the National Court Teams Resource  
22 Center in accordance with section 273(b)(2); and

23 “(3) no fewer than six key stakeholders who—

24 “(A) are members of the community in  
25 which the local Court Team is located;

1           “(B) are committed to working to restruc-  
2           ture the way the jurisdiction responds to the  
3           needs of maltreated infants and toddlers; and

4           “(C) represent a variety of individuals in-  
5           volved with the care of maltreated infants and  
6           toddlers, which may include pediatricians, child  
7           welfare workers, attorneys, court-appointed spe-  
8           cial advocates, mental health professionals, sub-  
9           stance abuse treatment providers, Early Head  
10          Start and child care providers, Court Improve-  
11          ment Program staff, and any other individuals  
12          who are involved in the care of maltreated in-  
13          fants and toddlers.

14          “(c) REQUIRED USE OF ASSISTANCE.—A local Court  
15          Team shall use any assistance received under this part to  
16          carry out the following activities:

17                 “(1) Conducting monthly case reviews of each  
18                 case handled by the local Court Team, in which all  
19                 individuals and organizations involved in a case meet  
20                 to review progress in such case, and to monitor and  
21                 track referral to, delivery of, and barriers against,  
22                 services for maltreated infants and toddlers and  
23                 their families.

24                 “(2) Incorporating child-focused services into  
25                 case plans for maltreated infants and toddlers, in-

1 including services such as medical, developmental, and  
2 mental health interventions and, as appropriate,  
3 services for children and parents together.

4 “(3) Organizing the provision of local training  
5 (provided by the National Court Teams Resource  
6 Center) to community members of the jurisdiction in  
7 which the local Court Team is located, including  
8 court officials, child welfare agencies, attorneys,  
9 Guardians Ad Litem, court-appointed special advo-  
10 cates, and other individuals and organizations pro-  
11 viding services to infants and toddlers in foster care.

12 “(4) Identifying areas in the community in need  
13 of improved mental health and substance abuse  
14 treatment, and assisting the National Court Teams  
15 Resource Center in improving mental health treat-  
16 ment for parents and children together, and sub-  
17 stance abuse treatment for families (including moth-  
18 ers and children), as needed.

19 “(5) Utilizing resource materials disseminated  
20 by the National Court Teams Resource Center to  
21 guide judges in the decision-making process regard-  
22 ing maltreated infants and toddlers, and to provide  
23 training for Court Team members.

24 “(6) Participating in the national evaluation  
25 conducted by the Administrator in accordance with

1 section 275, to determine the extent to which the ac-  
2 tivities of the local Court Team reduce the recur-  
3 rence of abuse and neglect and improve health and  
4 developmental outcomes for maltreated infants and  
5 toddlers.

6 “(d) PERMISSIBLE USE OF ASSISTANCE.—A local  
7 Court may use the assistance received under this part to  
8 carry out the following activities:

9 “(1) Developing processes for responding to pa-  
10 rental substance abuse, such as—

11 “(A) coordinating with local law enforce-  
12 ment agencies to allow rapid response teams to  
13 intervene quickly on behalf of infants and tod-  
14 dlers who are identified by law enforcement per-  
15 sonnel as being present during illegal activities  
16 related to methamphetamines or other illegal  
17 substances; and

18 “(B) establishing and maintaining relation-  
19 ships with substance abuse treatment programs  
20 to increase access to treatment for parents of  
21 maltreated infants and toddlers.

22 “(2) Identifying the areas in the community in  
23 need of early childhood mental health services, and  
24 assisting the National Court Teams Resource Center  
25 in providing relationship-based early childhood men-

1       tal health services by providing training on parent-  
2       child psychotherapy to mental health providers.

3           “(3) Any other activities that help meet the  
4       needs and improve the health and developmental  
5       outcomes of maltreated infants and toddlers in fos-  
6       ter care.

7       **“SEC. 275. EVALUATIONS AND REPORTS.**

8           “(a) EVALUATION FORM.—Not later than 6 months  
9       after the date of the enactment of this Act, the National  
10      Court Teams Resource Center shall create, and distribute  
11      to each local Court Team, an evaluation form that shall  
12      be used to periodically collect any data from local Court  
13      Teams that the National Court Teams Resource Center  
14      determines may be relevant to the reports required by sub-  
15      section (b).

16          “(b) REPORTS TO CONGRESS BY THE ADMINIS-  
17      TRATOR.—At the end of the three-year period beginning  
18      on the date of the enactment of this Act, and again at  
19      the end of the five-year period beginning on such date of  
20      enactment, the Administrator shall—

21           “(1) compile the data collected in the periodic  
22      evaluation forms completed by each local Court  
23      Team;

24           “(2) conduct a national evaluation of Court  
25      Teams, based on such compilation of data; and

1           “(3) report to Congress on the effectiveness of  
2 Court Teams, including the extent to which local  
3 Court Teams are—

4           “(A) improving access to services for mal-  
5 treated infants and toddlers;

6           “(B) reducing the recurrence of abuse and  
7 neglect;

8           “(C) promoting permanent placements of  
9 maltreated infants and toddlers; and

10           “(D) improving the developmental out-  
11 comes for maltreated infants and toddlers who  
12 have been in foster care.

13 **“SEC. 276. DEFINITIONS.**

14           “For the purposes of this part:

15           “(1) COURT-APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE.—

16           The term ‘court-appointed special advocate’ means  
17 an individual who is trained by a recognized court-  
18 appointed special advocate program and appointed  
19 by a court to advocate for the best interests of chil-  
20 dren who come into the court system primarily as a  
21 result of abuse or neglect.

22           “(2) COURT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM.—The  
23 term ‘Court Improvement Program’ means a pro-  
24 gram authorized under section 438 of the Social Se-  
25 curity Act (42 U.S.C. 629h).

1           “(3) GUARDIAN AD LITEM.—The term ‘Guard-  
2           ian Ad Litem’ means an attorney or court-appointed  
3           special advocate who is appointed by a court to ad-  
4           vocate for the best interests of children who come  
5           into the court system primarily as a result of abuse  
6           or neglect.

7           “(4) MALTREATED INFANT OR TODDLER.—The  
8           term ‘maltreated infant or toddler’ means any child  
9           three years of age or younger who is the victim of  
10          a substantiated case of physical abuse, neglect, med-  
11          ical neglect, sexual abuse, or emotional abuse.

12          “(5) NATIONAL EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOP-  
13          MENT ORGANIZATION.—The term ‘national early  
14          childhood development organization’ means a na-  
15          tional, private, nonprofit organization—

16                 “(A) that is dedicated to supporting the  
17                 healthy development and well-being of infants,  
18                 toddlers, and their families; and

19                 “(B) that has the capacity for research,  
20                 training, information dissemination, and leader-  
21                 ship development in all of the professional dis-  
22                 ciplines related to infants and toddlers three  
23                 years of age and younger.

24          “(6) QUALIFIED JUDGE.—The term ‘qualified  
25          judge’ means a judge who presides over a court that

1 has jurisdiction over children in foster care, such as  
2 a judge for a dependency court or family court.”.

3 **SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

4 Section 299 of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency  
5 Prevention Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 5671) is amended—

6 (1) in subsection (a)—

7 (A) in the header, by striking “PARTS C  
8 AND E)” and inserting “PARTS C, E, AND F)”;  
9 and

10 (B) in paragraph (2), by striking “parts C  
11 and E)” and inserting “parts C, E, and F)”;

12 (2) by redesignating subsection (d) as sub-  
13 section (e); and

14 (3) by inserting after subsection (c) the fol-  
15 lowing new subsection:

16 “(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR  
17 PART F.—There are authorized to be appropriated to  
18 carry out part F such sums as may be necessary for fiscal  
19 years 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011.”.

○