



1050 Thomas Jefferson Street, NW
Seventh Floor
Washington, DC 20007
202- 298-1800 Phone
202- 338-2416 Fax

Dan Press, Partner
202-298-1882
dsp@vnf.com

Dear Friends,

On February 11th, the [Campaign for Trauma-Informed Policy and Practice](#) (CTIPP), a pro bono client of Van Ness Feldman, launched The National Trauma Campaign. The goal of this effort is to educate Congress about the enormous impact of early childhood adversity on the nation's health and the federal budget, and to raise awareness about the availability of programs to prevent or moderate the effects of childhood trauma. The Campaign is devoted to identifying advocates in each of the 435 Congressional Districts to educate Congressional staff about the importance of trauma-informed programs in their District and to urge their Representative to join the Congressional Trauma Informed Caucus.

As way of background, a [1998 study published in the American Journal for Preventive Medicine](#), called the ACE (Adverse Childhood Experience) study, found that people who suffered from early childhood adversity such as sexual, physical or emotional abuse were much more likely as adults to suffer from drug and alcohol abuse, attempt suicide, drop out of school, perform poorly at work, and suffer from health issues like cancer, diabetes, and heart disease. A recent [World Health Organization study](#) found that ACEs cost the United States over \$700 billion a year just in health costs, while other studies have found it costs businesses over \$100 billion a year in lost productivity.

Neuroscientists have discovered the physiological process by which ACEs produce these outcomes. When children suffer ongoing trauma, their brain undergoes a change that leads their body to constantly pump stress hormones into their bloodstream so they are continually under a high level of stress. The result of this persistent stress is oftentimes depression, alcohol, drug, and physical abuse.

CTIPP plans to harness the growing number of persons and organizations around the country who are putting trauma-informed science to work in their communities to prevent and mitigate the effects of ACEs to reach out to their Senators and Congressional Representatives in their respective Congressional Districts, encouraging them to incorporate trauma-informed principles into the federal strategy. The Campaign's goal is to recruit a Local Liaison for every U.S. House and Senate office. Each Local Liaison will serve as the point of contact to their congressional office and for the Campaign.

Trauma-informed approaches are powerful. Two years ago I visited a school district on an Indian reservation in Arizona that was in crisis, with 33% of the students suspended for disciplinary reasons. As a result, the state had given the school an “F” academic rating. After I talked about how a trauma-informed approach could turn things around, several members of the school staff received trauma-informed training which enabled them to educate both teachers and students about how the residual effects of childhood trauma underlie many of the behavioral problems disrupting the classroom. Two years after implementing the full suite of trauma-informed approaches, at a very modest cost, the suspension rate has dropped to 7%, the absenteeism rate has been cut in half, the academic rating is rising steadily, and learning is actually taking place at the school.

There is no reason why every troubled school in the country can't produce a similar transformation. However, it will take Congressional action to make sure the information about trauma-informed approaches and the resources to implement them are delivered. That is the mission of the National Trauma Campaign.

Van Ness Feldman is proud to provide pro bono services to CTIPP, and to be a member of the team that designed and implemented the campaign. We hope you will join us in raising awareness about effective mechanisms for addressing and preventing childhood trauma. To learn more about the campaign and ways you can help, please visit: CTIPP.org/nationaltraumacampaign

Together we can make a difference in the lives of children!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dan Press". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dan Press