



Parents and Teachers Against Violence in Education
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Web site: Project NoSpank
www.nospank.net
PTAVE is a 501(c)(3)
nonprofit organization
E.I.N. 94-2884062

June 15, 2002

Dorothy L. Hunter, Deputy Director
Department of Motor Vehicles
Field Operations Division
P.O. Box 932311
Sacramento, CA 94232-3110

Dear Ms. Hunter,

Thank you for your letter of May 29. We are disappointed by your response. We fail to understand the reasons you gave and invite you to reconsider your decision. This letter is to explain why we believe our message is highly relevant to DMV clientele and to repeat our offer of the notices.

You say, "The Department of Motor Vehicles has the pleasure of providing licensing and registration services to over 34 million customers annually. Due to the nature of the services we provide, our clientele consists of persons of legal age to drive, generally 15^{1/2} years of age and up. While we appreciate the significance of the poster, the focus of your message is outside the arena of the clientele we serve."

The age of your clientele essentially includes the age of fertility, and the majority of your customers are or will become parents. Therefore this issue directly concerns them. Some bring their children with them to the branches. The display of no-spanking notices, exactly like the display of the no-smoking notices, would inform all visitors of the undesirability of certain behaviors on the premises. Furthermore, the notices would benefit visitors who find it profoundly offensive and distressing to be obliged to witness others hitting their children.

Our research of materials displayed in a typical DMV branch began at the Walnut Creek branch where we saw these items on display: a poster by the Tom Hawk Foundation with the slogan "Stop Trashing California" promoting recycling of discarded materials, a poster by the March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundations promoting awareness of their mission, a large poster by the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation showing a picture of an automobile with the caption "Driven to Reagan Country," and, of course, the familiar no-smoking notices.

We applaud your displaying notices urging DMV clientele to recycle their trash, to be aware of the tragic problem of birth defects and to refrain from smoking while inside the facility. Those are valuable messages. But the "Driven to Reagan Country" poster is puzzling. We can't fathom what possible utility such a message has for DMV clientele, all of whom presumably are already driving in California.

The statistics of children being mistreated are frightening. According to EPIC Branch, California Department of Health Services, the number of child victims of substantiated maltreatment for the year 1996 was 20.5 per 1,000 children. (The national rate for the same period was 14 per 1,000 children.) According to the Office of the Attorney General, Criminal Justice Statistics Center, there were 16,867 reports of physical abuse of California children and 25 abuse-related deaths

for the year 2001. Primary caretakers are the most frequent perpetrators, and most incidents of physical abuse are explained by perpetrators as having been punishments administered in response to a child's misbehavior—punishments which somehow went awry.

Were our no-spanking notices placed in all DMV branches, they would communicate to visitors that assaulting children is not universally condoned. For some, it would be their first encounter with such an idea. If that message caused just one parent among your 34 million clients per year to hesitate and reconsider before striking, and prevented just one California child from becoming the next child abuse statistic, this project would be justified. So, once again we invite you to join us in helping protect California's children by permitting the Spanish and English no-spanking notices to be displayed in DMV branches statewide.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jordan Riak". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "R".

Jordan Riak, Executive Director

cc:

Gray Davis, California Governor;

Bill Lockyer, California Attorney General,

Steven Gourley, Director, California Department of Motor Vehicles;

List members and readership of the Web site, Project NoSpank, at www.nospank.net