

TO: Dr. R. C. Barden  
FROM: Carol Tavris, Ph.D.  
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Dear Dr. Barden:

I am writing to express my unequivocal support for the bill to ban all therapies involving coercive restraint--including "rebirthing" and "holding therapy." These therapies may claim support from the therapists who practice them, but they are utterly without scientific validation; they are dangerous, having already claimed the lives of several children.

I have a Ph.D. in social psychology and my life's work has been devoted to educating the public about the difference between psychological science--ideas and practice based on good, solid, empirical evidence--and "junk" psychology, including unvalidated therapies. I am co-author of two leading psychology textbooks that are based on psychological science, and author of various trade books on psychological topics (such as "Anger: The misunderstood emotion").

I am a Fellow of the American Psychological Association and of the American Psychological Society; a member of the board of the Council for Scientific Clinical Psychology and Psychiatry; Consulting Editor for the Scientific Review of Mental Health Practice; and a member of editorial board for Psychological Science in the Public Interest (published by the American Psychological Society).

The general public -- including most legislators -- do not understand the growing chasm between psychological ideas based on good science, and those based on silly pseudoscience, dressed up in fancy psychological language. The promoters of holding therapy and its kin use all kinds of highfalutin' language to justify what they do, but the basic assumptions are utterly unsupported by any evidence, as the statements of the American Psychiatric Association and other professional organizations note.

I urge the Utah Senate to ban these practices, which would be nonsensical if they were not so devastatingly dangerous.

Sincerely,  
Carol Tavris, Ph.D.