

**Centennial Honors College**  
**Thomas E. Helm Undergraduate Research Day 2024**

**ABSTRACT**

Major: Political Science

Podium

Faculty Mentor(s): Jonathan Day

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**Congress and Child Abuse Legislation with a Focus on Child Sexual Abuse**

**Jayla Carle**

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The purpose of this project was to examine the history of child abuse legislation in Congress with a focus on child sexual abuse legislation. Using government websites and surveys conducted by political scientists, I started by researching the first major child abuse legislation in Congress (Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act of 1973) and ended with one of the most recent (the Eliminating Abusive and Rampant Neglect of Interactive Technologies Act of 2023). Each of the pieces of legislation was researched. This project starts from each bill first being introduced to Congress all the way down to the most recent activity of the bill whether that was becoming law or being debated on the House or Senate floor. This project found that there is no shortage of legislation attempting to protect children from not only sexual abuse but all forms of abuse. Additionally, this project also revealed that because of underfunding, some states do not meet the criteria set in these legislations. Overall, while the intentions behind all the legislation have been pure, underfunding has caused the success of these bills to be highly debated among individuals both in the federal and state governments as well as by the people of the United States.