



February 25, 2019

The Honorable Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rick Allen
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Sablan and Ranking Member Allen:

The Alliance to Prevent Restraint, Aversive Interventions and Seclusion (APRAIS) was established in 2004 by leading education, research and advocacy organizations with a common goal: to eliminate the use of dangerous and dehumanizing practices as a means of managing challenging behavior. Comprised of over 25 civil rights and disability advocacy organizations at both the national and state levels, APRAIS seeks to end of use of unnecessary and dangerous interventions in schools, treatment programs and residential facilities. We also seek to ensure that all children with disabilities grow up free from the use of aversive interventions including restraints and seclusion to respond to or control their behavior.

Though the use of restraint and seclusion is widespread, national data indicates that students with disabilities are roughly 20 times more likely than their peers without disabilities to be restrained and/or secluded. *All* of our nation's students deserve better. Children with disabilities should also be free from the fear that these harmful forms of behavior management will be used on them, their siblings, classmates, or their friends.

Today, APRAIS writes to urge the House Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education to engage in a meaningful and data-driven dialogue regarding the use of seclusion and restraint in our nation's schools – which have been demonstrated to result in emotional and physical trauma, serious injury, and even death. There is no evidence of their effectiveness in improving behavior or academic performance. In fact, the evidence on these practices that are neither ethical nor beneficial is that they are far more likely to have a spiraling effect resulting in additional unwanted behaviors. Further, there is an existing and growing body of evidence in support of positive alternatives in addressing challenging behaviors.

To that end, we ask you to work with your colleagues to develop legislation that will prohibit seclusion and limit physical restraint to true emergencies; and, support preventing problematic behavior through use of de-escalation techniques, conflict management, and evidence-based positive behavioral interventions and supports. This improved focus on prevention and training will greatly benefit students and school personnel alike.

Last Fall, APRAIS supported the *Keeping All Students Safe Act (KASSA)*, introduced by Rep. Beyer (D-VA) which includes these important provisions. We therefore encourage the House Education and Labor Committee to thoughtfully consider all components of KASSA to ensure a comprehensive bill is developed for consideration by the 116th Congress.

We stand ready to assist you and look forward to engaging with you in the development of the legislation so that all children, including children with disabilities, can be free of these harmful practices in school.

Sincerely,

The Arc of the United States
American Association of People with Disabilities
Autism Society of America
Autistic Self-Advocacy Network
Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law
Center for Public Representation
Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates
Council for Exceptional Children
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund
Family Alliance to Stop Abuse and Neglect
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Association of State Directors of Special Education
National Autism Association
National Center for Learning Disabilities
National Disability Rights Network
National Down Syndrome Congress
Parent to Parent USA
Respectability Law Center
SPAN Parent Advocacy Network
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cc: The Honorable Bobby Scott
The Honorable Virginia Foxx