



March 2, 2010

U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**RE: Vote to Support H.R. 4247 the Preventing Harmful Restraint and Seclusion in Schools Act**

Dear Representative:

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is the largest professional organization of teachers, administrators, parents, and others concerned with the education of children with disabilities, gifted and talents, or both. CEC is writing to urge you to vote to for H.R. 4247, the Preventing Harmful Restraint and Seclusion in Schools Act. This important legislation will provide much needed minimum standards for the appropriate use of restraint and seclusion and incentives for states to increase access to quality staff professional development.

CEC and its members strongly believe this legislation is well crafted to provide schools the flexibility they need to educate diverse students, and ensure they are safe. The Act would establish important minimum federal safety standards in schools, similar to the protections already in place in hospitals and other non-medical community based facilities. It would limit the use of physical restraint and locked seclusion, allowing these interventions only in emergency situations where there is an imminent threat of danger. Importantly, it would also encourage states to provide support and training to better protect students and professionals and prevent the need for emergency behavioral interventions.

Nationwide consistency is needed on this important issue. The Department of Education recently reported that many states do not have statutes or policies governing the use of restraints and seclusions. Moreover, the laws which exist are not consistent. CEC believes there needs to be a consistent federal minimum standard to ensure all students are safe. This legislation would provide that standard, and we urge you to support it when it comes to the floor this week.

Thank you for considering CEC's request. If you have any questions or concerns about this bill, please feel free to contact me directly at 703-264-9406.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Deborah A. Ziegler".

Deborah A. Ziegler, Ed. D.  
Associate Executive Director  
Policy and Advocacy Services