

Dear Rep. Miller, Rep. McMorris-Rodgers and Senator Dodd:

We are writing to express our strong support and appreciation for the Preventing Harmful Restraint and Seclusion in Schools Act (H.R. 4247/S.2860). Students with and without disabilities have for too long faced a situation where they must fear physical violence, injury and even death as a result of aversives, restraint and seclusion at school. We believe that school should be a place of learning, not a place of fear. This legislation represents a crucial step forward for students with disabilities in particular, who are the most vulnerable to these practices, and fulfills a key provision of the Justice for All Action Network Joint Campaign Agenda, calling on Congress to pass comprehensive legislation addressing the use of restraint, seclusion and aversives. Amongst the valuable provisions of this legislation are:

- * A prohibition on the use of restraint and seclusion in schools unless a student's behavior poses an immediate danger of physical injury and less restrictive interventions would be ineffective.

- * A prohibition on the use of any mechanical restraint, chemical restraint, or physical restraint that restricts air flow to the lungs, and any other aversive behavioral intervention that compromises health and safety.

- * A requirement for adequate training for school personnel imposing restraint and seclusion.

- * A requirement for immediate parental notification following each incident of restraint or seclusion.

- * A requirement for states to create a state plan that incorporates the minimum standards outlined above and report annually on the number of incidents of restraint and seclusion.

While we anticipate that aggressive follow through following passage will be needed to ensure that this legislation is meaningfully implemented for students with and without disabilities and their families, we believe that H.R. 4247 and S.2860 represent important civil rights legislation for all students. We look forward to working with you to help move this legislation through the legislative process while safeguarding and strengthening its vital protections for students with and without disabilities.

The Justice for All Action Network is a national cross-disability coalition, led by disability groups run by persons with disabilities with support from allies, committed to building a strong and unified cross-disability movement so that individuals with disabilities have the power to shape national policies, politics, media, and culture.

Regards,

Autistic Self Advocacy Network

American Association of People with Disabilities

Little People of America

Not Dead Yet

National Coalition of Mental Health Consumers/Psychiatric Survivors

National Council on Independent Living

National Association of the Deaf

ADAPT Montana

Family Voices

Coalition for Community Integration

National Center for Environmental Health Strategies

Center for Self-Determination

New York Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services (NYAPRS)

National Youth Leadership Network

United Spinal Association

National Spinal Cord Injury Association

Access Living

TASH