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December 22, 2009

The Honorable George Miller  
Chairman  
United States House of Representatives  
Committee on Education and Labor  
2205 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Miller:

The National Parent Teacher's Association (PTA) commends your efforts to protect children's health and safety by introducing H. R. 4247, Preventing Harmful Restraint and Seclusion in Schools Act. H.R. 4247 is the right step in protecting children's health and safety in schools by limiting, but not banning, the use of restraint and seclusion.

National PTA is concerned that there are currently no federal rules restricting restraint and seclusion in schools, the place where children spend the most time. Reports have detailed hundreds of abusive uses of restraint and seclusion by school staff, including children being pinned to the floor, handcuffed, gagged and duct-taped, and locked in closets. Restraint and seclusion has resulted in broken bones, cuts and bruises, and even deaths of children. The abusive practices are used on very young children, ages 6 – 10, and disproportionately on children with disabilities.

National PTA supports H.R. 4247 because it requires states to develop policies and procedures about using restraint and seclusion only in emergency situations where there is a threat of danger or injury. We also support the use of incentive grants to encourage States to provide training to school staff.

Again we commend your efforts to protect children's health and safety and thank you for introducing this important legislation to prevent harmful restraint and seclusion in schools.

For future reference, Elizabeth Rorick, Senior Policy Strategist, can be reached at [REDACTED]  
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Sincerely,

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