

Submitter: Rebecca Walter  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3835

Dear Members of the House Committee on Early Childhood and Human Services,

My name is Rebecca Walter, and I live in Jackson County. I am the parent of a child with a disability, and I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB 3835.

Restraint is a deeply traumatizing experience for all children, but it is especially harmful for children with disabilities who process the world differently. Loosening the language surrounding wrongful restraint and seclusion would only increase the risk of harm to children like my son.

There have been times when my son was restrained unnecessarily. He was treated as a threat rather than a child in need of support, even though he is only six years old. Instead of de-escalating the situation, the restraint heightened his distress, leading to repeated restraints within a short time frame. On one occasion, he was restrained four times in just five minutes. In his attempt to escape, he tried to climb a fence, which led to further restraint and, ultimately, seclusion with mats against the fence. When we were notified, we received no incident report, leaving us uncertain about the training and decision-making process that led to his restraint. This experience was so concerning that we made the difficult decision to move him to a new school.

While schools are permitted to use restraint when a child is deemed a threat to themselves or others, video footage often reveals that these decisions are highly discretionary. My son now internalizes these experiences, believing that he is a "bad kid" and that he does not belong. No child should feel this way in their learning environment.

Every child deserves access to a safe and supportive education, regardless of their diagnosis. Instead of weakening protections, we need stronger policies, clearer guidelines, and more transparent reporting on restraint and seclusion. I urge you to protect our most vulnerable students by ensuring that all children receive the care, respect, and education they deserve.

Sincerely,?

Rebecca Walter?

Jackson County Resident and Parent