



March 26, 2025

Chair Gelser-Blouin, Vice Chair Linthicum, and Members of the Committee,

For more than four decades, Living Opportunities has worked to support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) in leading full, meaningful lives in their communities. Today, I write in support of SB 1113, which brings much-needed clarity and thoughtful structure to the use of restraint and seclusion in public education programs.

Families and providers in the I/DD community are deeply familiar with crisis situations. When behaviors escalate, it's often due to overwhelming fear, communication barriers, or sensory overload. We've seen the pain that comes when staff feel unsure of how to intervene—or are terrified of doing the wrong thing because the definitions are unclear. The lack of clarity in current policy has led to investigations that retraumatize both the child and the caregiver, even when no harm occurred.

SB 1113 brings much-needed clarity to what does—and does not—constitute restraint or seclusion. It defines “restraint” as the physical restriction of a student’s ability to move their head, limbs, torso, or other body parts through force or pressure, while making it clear that supportive actions—like helping a student complete a task or offering a comforting touch—are not considered restraint. It also broadens the understanding of “seclusion” to include any space where a student is prevented from leaving, not just a designated room. Importantly, it clarifies that a temporary room clear, often used to help a student calm down, does not qualify as seclusion unless the student is physically or otherwise prevented from exiting the area.

Even more importantly, the bill limits restraint and seclusion to only when there is an imminent risk of serious bodily injury, and only after all other efforts have been tried and failed. That level of specificity matters. It ensures these interventions are never used out of frustration, convenience, or control—and that when they must be used, they are done with the minimum force necessary, by trained personnel, and with continuous monitoring.

These guardrails are especially important for our community, where individuals may have significant trauma histories, communication differences, and heightened vulnerability. SB 1113 acknowledges that reality and reinforces the idea that safety must never come at the expense of dignity.

This is the kind of policy we’ve been asking for—one that takes into account the complexity of real-world situations, protects students, supports staff, and reduces fear-based reporting that can ultimately cause more harm than good.

We urge your support for SB 1113 and thank you for prioritizing the needs and safety of Oregon’s I/DD community.

Sincerely,

Amber Robles-Myre

Living Opportunities, Executive Director