



May 30, 2012

The Honorable Gregg Harper  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Harper,

The undersigned members of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities Education Task Force write to thank you for your recent editorial on restraint and seclusion in schools. We are deeply grateful for your commitment to this issue and your efforts to advance the Keeping All Students Safe Act, H.R. 1381.

The Keeping All Students Safe Act will establish national minimum standards for the use of restraint and seclusion in schools, strengthening protections in every state and ensuring the safety of all students and school personnel. The bill will ensure that restraint and seclusion are used only in emergencies threatening physical safety. The bill also promotes a shift toward preventing problematic behavior through the use of de-escalation techniques, conflict management and evidence-based positive behavioral interventions and supports. This shift of focus will help school personnel understand the needs of their students and safely address the source of challenging behaviors – a better result for everyone in the classroom.

We wholeheartedly agree that most of our nation's educators recognize that each child is precious and are committed to educating all of their students. But we also know that they need the appropriate support and guidance in order to do so. Many schools are already implementing best practices in managing problem behaviors; the Keeping All Students Safe Act will promote the use of these practices in all schools and ensure that school personnel receive the training that they need.

We are saddened by the recent statistics from the Office of Civil Rights and we are concerned by several of the recent news reports about restraint and seclusion. As you said, our nation's children deserve better. We need more than the current patchwork of state laws to ensure that every child is afforded protection.

We applaud you for your efforts and leadership, and we look forward to working with you to move this long-overdue legislation quickly through Congress.

Sincerely,

ACCSES

Advocacy Institute

American Association of People with Disabilities

American Foundation for the Blind

Association of University Centers on Disabilities

Autism National Committee

Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law

Council for Exceptional Children

Council for Learning Disabilities

Council of Parent Attorneys & Advocates, Inc.

Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund

Easter Seals

Epilepsy Foundation

Higher Education Consortium for Special Education

Mental Health America

National Alliance on Mental Illness

National Association of School Psychologists

National Association of State Directors of Special Education

National Center for Learning Disabilities

National Council on Independent Living

National Disability Rights Network

National Down Syndrome Congress

National Down Syndrome Society

National Parent Teacher Association

National Rehabilitation Association

Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children

The Arc

United Cerebral Palsy

The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities is a coalition national consumer, advocacy, provider and professional organizations headquartered in Washington, D.C. Since 1973, the CCD has advocated on behalf of people of all ages with physical and mental disabilities and their families. CCD has worked to achieve federal legislation and regulations that assure that the 54 million children and adults with disabilities are fully integrated into the mainstream of society. For additional information, please contact:

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