

SENATE EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
SENATE BILL 705
EDUCATION—PHYSICAL RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION—LIMITATIONS, REPORTING, AND TRAINING
MARCH 2, 2022
POSITION: SUPPORT

As the mother of a 19 year old child with significant cognitive disabilities and an advocate, I am in support of SB705 to minimize the use of restraint and seclusion throughout MD and to also ensure that school districts follow the current statute involving the limited use of seclusion to prevent imminent serious physical harm to self and others. The “harm” standard has not been followed; hence, the need for this bill to protect children from trauma, injuries, unnecessary mishandling of students, time out of the classroom, and extended staffing resources used to restrain and seclude.

As a Howard County resident concerned about doing my part to ensure a safe learning environment for special education students, the recent MSDE report of restraint and seclusion data was alarming. In 2020-21 COMAR 13A.08.04.05 report ([ED7-1102_2021.pdf \(endseclusion.org\)](#)), HCPSS reported more episodes of restraint and seclusion than any other district in MD when most students were educated in a virtual or predominantly virtual environment. The majority of these incidents involved a minority population of African-American and Asian students. Our minority students are disproportionately restrained and secluded compared to their white peers, in most counties, including Howard County.

Of utmost concern, are the data around the use of restraint and seclusion for our youngest learners, aged 5-10 years old. Our babies in special education are being traumatized in our public schools with this aversive and archaic intervention. A 141 episodes of seclusion and 130 episodes on restraint for this population in Howard County.

This bill works to end unnecessary restraint and minimize seclusion statewide and will have systemic benefits to all students in MD as this intervention. Aversive techniques will be replaced with evidenced based positive behavioral interventions and teams will be forced to think outside the existing practices, improve the process of de-escalation, identify antecedents, educate themselves on resources available to improve behavioral outcomes for our most vulnerable students in MD. Please support SB705 to ensure safety for all in our school buildings.