

DATE: March 2, 2022

COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs

BILL NO: SB0705

BILL TITLE: Education – Physical Restraint and Seclusion – Limitations, Reporting and Training

POSITION: Favorable

NAME: Tracy Masur

I am the parent of a six-year-old kindergartner in a Maryland Public Elementary School. My child had a comprehensive IEP going into kindergarten and I am very involved. Despite this, my little one was subjected to multiple non-sanctioned, traumatic restraints under the guise of a "CPI Transport" (no MSDE definition) or simple "Physical Escort" (MSDE defines as temporary touching or holding of hand, wrist, arm, shoulder or back for purposes of inducing a student to walk).

I have NEVER given permission for restraint or seclusion use and it is not in my child's IEP. When asked if my small child was being restrained or secluded, I was told repeatedly, no.

I persisted to see footage, which was only available from hallway cameras. The footage proved it was not CPI or even a "Physical Escort" but some sort of aggressive restraint that is not even taught by the county school system. They would grab my child backwards while they walked forward. With my six-year old's arms supporting the weight of their entire body, the school staff would either lift my child, so their feet were in the air, or drag my child, with feet limp, through the halls of their elementary school.

These restraints were done by multiple staff, including administration and special educators, often multiple times a day. I was not given proper documentation, per MSDE, in accordance with COMAR 13A.08.04.05.

My six-year-old also spent significant time in a "Quiet Room," which had many names in the four months my child was at the school. Names included "Quiet Room," "De-escalation Room," "Time Out Room," "Safe Room," "Room 1" and "Alternative Learning Environment." My child was also placed in a classroom with only adults, for large portions of the day, isolated from all peers. This was also referred to as an "Alternative Learning Environment." My kindergartner was "transported" (restrained) multiple times within that room, to a de-escalation space made of gym mats. My child was blocked from leaving the "Quiet Room," "Alternative Learning Environment" and gym mat enclosure.

My little one has been seriously traumatized after only 4 months of kindergarten at our districted Maryland Public Elementary School and I am left to pick up the pieces.

I ask that you strongly support Senate Bill 705, to expand reporting requirements, develop an accountability system for seclusion and restraint, and to ban the very harmful practice of seclusion in all public schools, as well as limit the use of seclusion in nonpublic schools. Thank you.