



March 5, 2025

HB 1204 - Public and Nonpublic Schools - Student Elopement - Notice and Reporting Requirements

Position: Support

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Shari Bailey, and I am the parent of a child with Jacobsen Syndrome. I am submitting this testimony in robust support of House Bill 1204 (HB1204), which mandates that certain public and nonpublic schools notify a parent or guardian if a student attempts or successfully elopes.

As a parent, I possess a profound understanding of the unique and intricate needs of my child. Additionally, in my capacity as a nonprofit leader for an organization dedicated to supporting children with special needs, I have witnessed firsthand the perils of elopement. This experience has underscored the critical importance of recognizing the associated risks and identifying effective strategies to mitigate them.

Elopement represents a pervasive issue that can tragically result in fatalities. Implementing systems to report instances of attempted or successful elopement will empower families and communities to establish proactive measures aimed at safeguarding children from harm.

The key benefits of HB1204 include:

- **Measuring Risk:** Developing mechanisms for monitoring and reporting elopement events will provide families with essential insights into the dangers their child may face.
- **Exploration of Options:** The information garnered from these reports can assist families and school staff in implementing proactive measures to prioritize the child's safety.
- **Filling Critical Gaps with Resources:** The data collected could reveal trends that necessitate more comprehensive safety protocols and measures to protect children susceptible to elopement.
- **Accountability and Oversight:** The requirement for these reports will foster accountability and oversight, ensuring that children remain safe while at school.



This legislation offers vital support for families grappling with the challenges of elopement and aids schools in better understanding how to manage and respond to such incidents.

For these compelling reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to render a favorable report for HB1204.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Shari Bailey
Founder & CEO

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