



COPAA APPLAUDS HOUSE ACTION TO PASS RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION BILL H.R. 4247

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Towson, MD

The Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates (COPAA) today applauds the House of Representatives for passing H.R. 4247, the Keeping All Students Safe in School Act. This bill will implement minimum standards to protect all schoolchildren from the dangers of restraint, seclusion, and aversives. H.R. 4247 passed by a vote of 262 to 153.

Parents should be able to send their children to school everyday knowing they will be safe. But as the GAO and COPAA's own study found, hundreds if not thousands of students are abused in school, resulting in trauma, injury, and death. The majority are children with disabilities.

Roughly half of all states provide little or no protection against restraint, seclusion, and aversives. The bill will require states with laws below the federal minimum standard to upgrade their laws.

We give tremendous thanks to Congressman George Miller, Chair of the House Education and Labor Committee, and Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers, and their staffs, for the leadership on this issue. They have worked long and hard to pass H.R. 4247.

We thank Senator Chris Dodd for introducing a companion bill, S.2860. We call upon the Senate to pass the bill quickly and for the President to sign it into law.

Preventing abusive restraint and seclusion has long a major goal for COPAA. In 2008, we adopted a [Declaration of Principles](#), opposing the use of abusive interventions on school children. More recently, we issued [Unsafe in the Schoolhouse: Abuse of Children with Disabilities](#) (Jessica Butler, COPAA 2009), documenting 180 incidents of abuse of children with disabilities. COPAA's report was relied upon by the House of Representatives in adopting H.R. 4247, and was recognized in the [legislative history](#). We also provided written testimony to the House about the danger of these techniques. <http://www.copaa.org/news/unsafeletter.html>

In addition, COPAA has filed [amicus briefs](#) in two major cases opposing the use of these abusive methods. We plan to issue a manual for special education practitioners to help them combat these techniques.

HR 4247 was previously known as the Preventing Harmful Restraint and Seclusion in Schools Act. Only minor technical changes were made to the bill.