



Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates, Inc.

April 6, 2011

The Honorable George Miller
Committee on Education and the Workforce, Minority Staff
2101 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Miller:

COPAA is pleased to offer our support for HR 1381 "Keeping All Students Safe Act" to address abuse through the use of restraints, seclusion and aversive interventions in schools. We sincerely thank you for your staunch support of this critical issue. It is well-documented that the use of restraint and seclusion in schools is neither effective nor therapeutic. Instead, it is mentally and physically abusive. Thousands of cases of restraint and seclusion occur in our nation's schools annually, often with tragic results, including the death of children. Federal legislation is necessary to set forth minimum standards for states to protect children from what has historically been the unacceptable use of these methods and set up a structure to prevent future abuse.

COPAA is a national organization of parents, advocates and attorneys dedicated to protecting the civil and educational rights of children with disabilities, whose members represent families in 48 States and the District of Columbia. As such, COPAA believes this legislation is a crucial first step toward the ultimate goals of eliminating abuse and restraint in schools and assuring that children who exhibit challenging behaviors obtain appropriate, safe, and effective educational services. We continue our work to raise the bar of protection and we support this bill as an important first step toward acknowledging this widespread problem and improving the protection of all school children.

This bill contains many provisions that provide a minimum floor of protection that does not yet exist in many states. We will not rest until all students are protected in accordance with the principles outlined in our updated document: [COPAA Declaration of Principles Opposing the Use of Restraint, Seclusion and Aversive Interventions](#).

We look forward to working with you to pass legislation that protects every student's right to be safe at school.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Denise Stile Marshall". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping 'Q' at the end.

Denise Stile Marshall, M.S.
Executive Director