

To whom it may concern:

I am unable to participate in the hearing today due to unforeseen illness.

I would like to submit comments in support of HR 5347.

On the heels of the deplorable "scream rooms" in Middletown, CT, there has been much public discussion. In its intended form, the scream room, by law, should have been a room for proper restraint and seclusion of children with behavioral issues or special needs. It appears that the rooms used in Middletown were a gross violation of these laws and that those putting children in these rooms either were in violation of these laws as well or did not understand their proper use.

Regardless, this situation does beg the question as to how schools and school districts are accountable for their actions. The fact that situation was allowed to happen suggests that this accountability does not exist and that there are in fact no consequences for these deplorable actions. Further, if these reporting structures were in place at every pass, would the situation in Middletown have happened? How many other children are in in crisis across the state because their school districts are not being held accountable for their actions and therefore not providing safe and effective restraint and seclusion rooms?

I support this legislation and hope that it can be implemented to protect our children, our most vulnerable population from further abuse.

Shannon Knall
State Advocacy Chair
Autism Speaks