

Select Committee on Children Bill # 5347

Good Morning Chairladies, and Members of the Select Committee on Children. I want to thank you for taking steps to address a clear problem that exists with the uses of Seclusion Rooms in our Public School system here in Connecticut. At the same time it sickens me deeply to hear the Education Committee refused to hear this bill, stating Legislation in 2007 was passed to handle these issue and there is no need for any further action.

I sit before you today knowing the Chair person of the Education Committee is wrong. I know a family who are living a nightmare of what happens when a School system uses these Seclusion Rooms. I know a family who had no idea what a Safe Room was when they read those two words in their sons Behavioral Intervention Plan. I know a family who got a phone call a few days before Christmas telling them their son was in the Safe Room, but again had no idea what the Safe Room really was. I know a family who's son over Christmas Break could not stop talking about being placed in a small room, as he told his mother and father a room like a closet. I know a family who told their son at the end of Christmas break he would be going back to school in a few days, only to hear their son say the words "if I have to go back with the mean kids, I will kill myself.". I know family who on Jan,5, 2012 the mom went into say goodbye to the son before leaving for work and found the son with a toy saw, trying to cut his neck open. The mom and dad rushed their son to CCMC in Hartford. And I know later that day that Mother and Father's six year old son who has Autism told the Doctor at CCMC "he wanted to die If he had to go back to school...he hates life If he had to go back with mean kids...he was scared to go to school because he might have to go in the quiet room and it is a closet..."

I know this Family's Father went to the school and asked to see this Safe Room. I know what this Family's Father saw, was a 4 foot by 4 foot room. With pads on the floor and walls, with a metal Door that had a window .I know this Family was told their son was held in the room for 20 minutes with the door held closed. I know this family's son told his mother and Father he was in the room bare foot and he kicked at the door , a metal door with his bare feet.

At this time you may all be wondering why are these boys parents not hear speaking out? They are in a very ugly fight with their school District trying to get their son the help he needs. And their Attorney fears if they were to speak out about what has taken place the district would stop doing anything to help their son.

As a resident and taxpayer of the State of Connecticut this makes me sick and a shame to think the State of CT would allow this to happen in our state in 2012.

I implore this Committee to take the steps needed to correct this heinous and vulgar crime against the Special needs Children of Connecticut.

In the 1990's I worked in the prison's here in Connecticut. I saw the cells that hold the inmates, I have to ask this Committee and all members of the Connecticut State Government, when and what happen that we the people of Connecticut allow the Special needs Children of Connecticut to be treated with less dignity and respect then murderers or rapist?

What I think this Committee needs to address first is the removal of all doors on Seclusion Rooms in all public or State funded Schools in the state of Connecticut. I have had the chance to Visit two Special needs school here in CT, the CCMC school and Natchaug School. While at both Schools I found in both case their Seclusion Rooms were Door free.

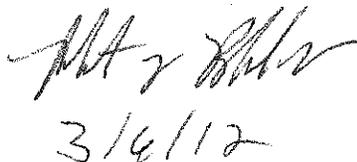
I think this Committee must take a very hard look at if the Public Schools in Connecticut and see if they have their staff trained in the uses of these rooms, and to the have the correct number of staff trained to handle their Special needs children? And if the schools choose to have and use Seclusion Room it must be mandated that the school have a BCBA on seen at all times when the Seclusion Room is in uses.

Also I think this Committee must place in this bill, unless its already stated in a law on the books at this time that the schools must fully disclose what a Seclusion Room is, where it is located in the School, and must be seen by the parent or guardian of the Child, before a school can place a child in such a room.

I feel this Committee must also include if not already addressed in other Legislation, that if a child is placed in a Seclusion Room the school must alert the parents or guardian with in 24 hour hours of the placement taken place. I know in this family's case they have learned their son was placed in a Seclusion Room three times but only told of one time.

I leave you with this. What would have happen if the boy I spoke of had gone in to the kitchen which is the room right next to his bed room and removed a stake knife from the drawer and used the knife instead of the toy saw? Would we be here today talking about just adding words to enforce reporting? Is it going to take the death and the blood spill of one of Connecticut Special Needs Children to make real change?? Thank You

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