

Testimony on Bill S.B.927

An Act Concerning Seclusion and Restraint in Schools

Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban, and members of the Committee on Children. My name is Carolyn Goodridge and I am social worker and legislative liaison for the CT Association of Foster and Adoptive Parents. I am testifying in support of Bill 927.

Children who enter foster care suffer from the trauma of the neglect or abuse that prompted their entry into care, as well as separation anxiety of being removed from their home. These children are also highly represented in the data of children who have been restrained and/or secluded in schools. Restraining or secluding a child who already has faced trauma (which could include being locked in a small space) only increases the trauma. There is no evidence that restraint or seclusion actually improves behavior. In most cases, the behaviors escalate as the child's "fight or flight" response takes over. Non-verbal children in the autism spectrum and developmentally delayed children are not able to verbally express their emotions, which then come out in behaviors. There are de-escalation methods that can be more soothing to children and have more long-lasting effects than restraint and seclusion.

Bill 927 requires other training to be provided to school personnel that will help them to de-escalate behaviors so that restraints and seclusions can be eliminated. This training will actually improve the learning environment for the staff as well as the children.

Please support Bill 927.