



CONNECTICUT LEGAL SERVICES

A PRIVATE NONPROFIT CORPORATION
62 WASHINGTON ST. MIDDLETOWN, CT 06457
TELEPHONE (860) 344-0447
FAX (860) 346-2938
E-MAIL POVERTYLAW@CONNLEGLALSERVICES.ORG

ROSS H. GARBER
BOARD CHAIR

STEVEN D. EPPER-EPSTEIN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DEBORAH R. WITKIN
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

LINDA C. SPADA
COMPTROLLER

MARLENE BRODSKY
ASSISTANT COMPTROLLER

ASTRID LEBRÓN
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

AVERY MOORE
DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANT

WHIT FREER
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
ADMINISTRATOR

PRISCILLA CUTTINO
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE
ADMINISTRATOR

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
62 WASHINGTON STREET
MIDDLETOWN, CT 06457

LAW OFFICES

211 STATE STREET
BRIDGEPORT, CT 06604

16 MAIN STREET
NEW BRITAIN, CT 06051

153 WILLIAMS STREET
NEW LONDON, CT 06320

20 SUMMER STREET
STAMFORD, CT 06901

85 CENTRAL AVENUE
WATERBURY, CT 06702

872 MAIN STREET
WILLIMANTIC, CT 06226

SATELLITE OFFICES

5 COLONY STREET
MERIDEN, CT 06451

98 SOUTH MAIN STREET
SOUTH NORWALK, CT 06854

29 NAEK ROAD, SUITE 5A
VERNON, CT 06066

**TESTIMONY OF CONNECTICUT LEGAL SERVICES, INC.
FOR THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
MARCH 11, 2015
IN SUPPORT OF RAISED S.B. 1060
AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION
IN SCHOOLS**

This testimony is submitted to the Education Committee by the Children at Risk Unit at Connecticut Legal Services (CLS). For over 30 years, the attorneys in the Children at Risk Unit at CLS have represented low-income families in accessing education and behavioral health services for their children.

CLS fully supports Raised S.B. NO 1060, an Act Concerning the Use of Restraint and Seclusion in Schools. Restraint and seclusion are ineffective interventions, often used when educators do not have the tools they need to support students with disability related behaviors. Restraint and seclusion are dangerous and traumatic not only for children, but also school staff, and should only be used as a last resort.

CLS represents numerous children with disabilities throughout the state who have experienced unnecessary physical restraint and seclusion in school. One recent example is young boy who is diagnosed with PTSD, has a visual impairment, and difficulty with school attendance. Each time he is physically restrained in school, it re-traumatizes him, and his attendance drops for the next few weeks. His visual impairment also makes restraint a particularly harmful intervention.

This bill directly answers these concerns and will prohibit school staff from using the severe measures of restraint and seclusion on students unless there is a true emergency. Additionally, it requires the exploration of less restrictive means as a way to resolve the situation. This bill gives educators the tools they need by requiring districts to train school staff on the use of “de-escalation techniques,” and on teaching appropriate strategies to children with limited coping skills and emotional regulation.

CLS urges you to ensure that children do not suffer from one more unnecessary restraint or seclusion and to **support Raised S.B. NO 1060**, An Act Concerning the Use of Restraint and Seclusion in Schools. Please feel free to contact CLS attorney Jillian Griswold at (860)786-6364 with any questions.

Submitted by:
Connecticut Legal Services, Inc.

