

Rose Belanger
Presque Isle
LD 1248

April 23, 2025
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

In Support of LD 1097 – An Act Regarding Behavioral Health Support for Students in Public Schools

Against LD 1248 (formerly 1398) – An Act to Provide De-escalation and Behavior Intervention Training for School Personnel

Good Afternoon Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and Members of the Education Committee,

My name is Roseanna Belanger and I am a self-advocate from Presque Isle, ME. I am currently the Chair of the Board of Speaking Up For Us, Maine's Self-Advocacy Network.

I am in support of providing teachers and educators with more training to calm people in a crisis and against the use of restraints on a person because I think that it restricts our rights. I have heard support staff to people with disabilities say that restraints are necessary for keeping clients safe, but even if staff are trained in doing restraints, they could still make mistakes. Staff could still hurt a client, or a client could hurt a staff.

So, knowing this, I feel like you should never restrain someone.

I think there are better ways to help get more information and figure out what a person is going through instead of using restraints. There are ways to calm people down without force. If something or someone triggers a student, restraining could just make the problem worse. No one should be restrained unless it is an emergency (life or death).

From my own past, I have gone to a place called KidsPeace. I don't know if it is still up and running but it is in Ellsworth, ME. I was getting a chance to see the facilities they had there. One of the buildings happened to have school rooms and I was shown the restraint room where they would restrain clients. I never got restrained, but it scared me that if I did something wrong or had a panic attack that I would be restrained. I should never have felt that way, I wouldn't want anyone else to feel scared or that someone would violate their space when they just need time to cool off.

I thank you for your time to submit this written testimony.

Sincerely,

Roseanna Belanger Presque Isle, ME

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