

May 5, 2021

Testimony in Support of LD 1373 “An Act To Keep All Students Safe by Restricting the Use of Seclusion and Restraint in Schools”

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and the distinguished members of the Joint Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs,

Hello, my name is Maryann Preble, and I am a member of SUFU. I live in Augusta, ME. Being restrained is traumatizing for people with disabilities, and they will have to remember those moments for the rest of their lives.

When I was 10 years old, I was put in Pineland and on my first day I was almost restrained in the Admissions Building when because I was crying. In Pineland, I saw my peers get restrained, it made me feel bad because I could not help them. One time, when I was there, I was blamed for something that I did not do, and no one listened to me. As a result, I was locked in a room with no clothes on and only had a mattress on the ground. I was left in that room until the person who blamed me came forward and told the truth. Seclusion and restraints should not be options for dealing with a person's behaviors.

There should be another option to help calm people having behaviors, all they want is to be calmed down and talked to instead of being forcibly restrained.

There needs to be a better solution than what is in place.

People with disabilities are a reflection of the way they are treated. Behaviors are a reaction to a person's environment. If there is a negative environment with the planned use of restraints, it is more likely the person will act out and have behaviors. Their providers should sit down with the person and talk to them rather than restrain the person. People have a right to express their feelings without fear of being restrained.

Sincerely,

Maryann Preble