

Sarah Vickers  
Bangor

Dear Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and members of the joint committee. I am writing to you as a special education teacher in a self-contained setting. My current program services students with emotional and behavioral deficits.

I am writing to you with opposition to LD 1373. I am concerned with the current language and changes proposed with this bill. Physical interventions are only put into place as a last resort when a student is a danger to themselves or others. Schools have worked to provide early intervention and de-escalation when students are unsafe but there are instances when a student requires a physical intervention in order to maintain safety.

Some students require the use of seclusion in order to maintain safety. Currently, a staff member remains with a student if they are requiring a space away from peers due to unsafe behaviors. If this bill is to pass then the use of a safe space or calming room would no longer be an option. As we consider the function of some unsafe/ challenging behaviors the use of a separate space helps to address this function and de-escalate the behavior. I want to stress that it is important for schools to utilize early interventions and de-escalation strategies prior to the use of a separate space or restraint however there are times when it is necessary. By not allowing this use students, staff, and the escalated individual will be put at risk.

Another concern I have is the this bill is targeted toward students with an IEP or 504. It does not address students without these services. While it is uncommon for students without a 504 or IEP to require such interventions it is discriminatory to only address those with a 504 or IEP.

I strongly oppose this proposal and urges you to vote not to pass LD 1373.