

Chair Gelser, Members of the Committee:

My name is Jacquie Gamble and I am the Special Education Teacher with the Coos Bay School District. I have concerns about HB 2756 and how it will impact the safety of students and staff in my school district.

Students enter my Structured Learning Center with impaired social and emotional coping skills. Their disabilities vary from special education definition to mental health conditions, such as Intermittent Explosive Disorder. Students in my classroom are working on increasing academic instruction time, developing/improving social skills, cognitive flexibility, improving communication, impulse control, and improving emotional regulation.

Due to the lack of mental health and alternative placements in coastal areas my classroom is the destination of many behavioral students that are not able to be successful in a mainstream environment due to safety and disruptive behavior. As students gain social/emotional skills they are gradually mainstreamed to general education classrooms.

A typical student that enters my program has physical and verbal aggression toward staff and peers that includes, but not limited to biting, hitting, kicking, spitting, grabbing, pushing, throwing items (ipads, laptops, books, chairs, board games, shoes, etc.), pushing, hair pulling, shoving, punching, kicking, scratching, pinching, screaming, swearing, running, property destruction, stripping, and threatening. The intensity of these behaviors may range from mild to explosive. The duration of verbal and physical aggressions will vary from 5 minutes to an hour.

Seclusion only occurs when safety becomes a concern for the student and others. My room is a small space with a half door; staff stands by the door continually monitoring the student, and could intervene quickly to keep the student safe from self-harm if needed. Seclusions are the least traumatic for my students. It enables my students to de-escalate on their own, supports staff to positively debrief with a student to go over expected behavior, go over calming techniques, and create a plan with the student to work on problem solving as an alternative to potential violent outbursts.

If seclusions are not allowed in my classroom the following will occur:

- Room clears every 10 minutes, which disrupts students' routines, transitions, and learning progress.
- Greater risk of student injury
- Greater risk of staff injury
- Greater risk of property destruction
- Greater risk of students trying to evade school grounds and into the community (roads, streets)

If seclusions are removed it will take away a safe option for managing violent behaviors, which is a grave safety issue in public schools for all students and staff.

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