

Submitter: Sarah Horobin  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3835

Dear Chairperson Hartman and Members of the Committee,  
My name is Sarah Horobin, and I am a special education teacher. I want to express my strong support for House Bill 3835.  
HB 3835 is a critical step toward protecting both students and educators by clarifying the definitions of unlawful restraint and seclusion. As a special education teacher, I have witnessed the challenges of ensuring student safety during moments of crisis. This bill ensures that our responses remain consistent, fair, and trauma-informed while safeguarding the rights and well-being of all involved.

Special education teachers and instructional assistants face significant risks daily. They endure physical aggression, including slaps, punches, bites, scratches, and hair-pulling. This year, a teacher in my building suffered a broken finger from a student, resulting in permanent damage and the need for surgery. Students also frequently engage in self-harm or dangerous behaviors that require intervention. Recently, a teacher in my district was placed on leave and investigated for child abuse after intervening to stop a student from slamming their head on the floor. Incidents like these have left educators fearful of stepping in due to concerns about potential allegations.

Teachers do not want to cause harm to students. Their primary goal is to support and protect them, often putting themselves at risk in the process. However, the current definitions of restraint and seclusion have created uncertainty, making it difficult for educators to act without fear of repercussions. HB 3835 provides much-needed clarity, ensuring that reasonable, age-appropriate interventions—such as briefly holding a student to de-escalate a situation—are not classified as wrongful restraint.

This bill continues to protect students from unnecessary and harmful restraint and seclusion. It explicitly defines unlawful restraint as actions used for punishment, convenience, or retaliation, or when excessive force causes harm. This distinction allows educators to intervene appropriately without fear of unjust accusations.

In closing, HB 3835 is a necessary step toward a safer, more supportive educational environment. It balances student protection with the ability of educators to respond effectively in crisis situations. I urge you to pass this bill to ensure both students and educators are safeguarded from the unintended consequences of vague policies.