



Mar 24, 2025

Representative Annessa Hartman, Chair, and members of the House Committee
On Early Childhood and Human Services,

My name is Guy Stephens. I am the founder and executive director of the Alliance Against Seclusion and Restraint (AASR). AASR is a national nonprofit organization and a community of over 35,000 parents, caregivers, self-advocates, educators, related professionals, and others working together to influence change in supporting children whose behaviors are often misunderstood. Our mission is to inform changes in policy and practice to reduce and eliminate the use of exclusionary punitive discipline and outdated behavioral management approaches and end the school-to-prison pipeline. Our organization and members strongly oppose HB 3835, which we believe will roll back critical protections for vulnerable children in Oregon.

The use of restraint and seclusion in schools and care facilities is not only ineffective but also dangerous and traumatizing. These practices do not address the root causes of stress behaviors and can lead to serious physical and psychological harm. HB 3835's proposed changes to narrow the definitions of wrongful restraint and seclusion are deeply concerning and could potentially increase the use of these harmful practices.

Furthermore, the bill's provisions to allow sending children in foster care out of state are alarming. Oregon's past experiences with out-of-state placements resulted in widespread abuse and mistreatment of children. The proposed oversight measures in HB 3835 do not provide sufficient safeguards to prevent a repeat of these tragic outcomes.

Instead of loosening regulations, Oregon should focus on eliminating the use of seclusion and reducing the use of restraint. That is not just our opinion but one

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shared by the largest crisis management training provider in the country, the Crisis Prevention Institute. How do we reduce and eliminate these practices? We encourage you to implement trauma-informed, neuroscience-aligned, neurodiversity-affirming, relationship-driven, and collaborative approaches to supporting children in systems of care. By adopting these approaches, you can create a safer and more supportive environment for all children and staff while reducing the need for restrictive and potentially harmful interventions.

In 2022, the Alliance Against Seclusion and Restraint (AASR) partnered with the Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI). Our partnership focused on accelerating progress on our shared goals. Through this partnership, AASR contributed to the development of a new training program called Reframing Behavior. Reframing Behavior is a new schoolwide training program that unpacks the latest neuroscience research to help all educators build a more positive, supportive learning environment and prevent disruptive behavior. It is possible we can reduce and eliminate these practices when we come together.

We urge the committee to reject HB 3835 and instead consider alternatives that prioritize children's safety and well-being. Oregon's vulnerable youth deserve better protections, not fewer. Let's work together to implement positive, supportive strategies that address the root causes of challenging behaviors and create nurturing environments for all children. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Guy Stephens".

Guy Stephens
Executive Director
Alliance Against Seclusion and Restraint