

Hello,

I wanted to write to express my thoughts and concerns regarding changes to laws regarding the use of seclusion. I am a behavior analyst who has worked in a setting IV facility for nearly 9 years. During this time, we have faded the use of seclusion greatly based on the student population and the current laws. There are students that respond best to having a space on their own to calm without staff intervention. When assessing behaviors, we have students who engage in behaviors for the purposes of gaining attention from staff. In those situations, a student's physical aggression may escalate because it requires the intervention of multiple staff. For those students we can keep students and staff safe most effectively when we can remove as much attention as possible and allow for de-escalation. The idea of removing seclusion without any additional supports has been talk of discussion for years. As setting IV staff this is a very scary thought and has led many staff to share that they would leave if these safety tools were not in place. The state of staffing in an educational facility is dire as it is and keeping staff safe and comfortable with their work environment is critical for staff retention. If seclusion must be eliminated, we need to have a plan on how we are going to replace this safety tool and make staff feel safe, secure, and comfortable with their work environment. The behaviors continue to escalate, and the students continue to get larger and come with more intense behaviors, but there have only been discussions on what is being taken away as tools rather than how we are going to support this escalation.

Thank you for your consideration.

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