

Good afternoon. My name is Tammy (Dickson) Chanley and my son is Lane Dickson, who is now 13 and has Down syndrome. Some of you may remember me when I have been to give testimony on other educational issues and may remember Lane. He is still a little guy, about 62 pounds with strawberry blonde hair, blue eyes and dimples, and a smile that will bring you joy.

I am speaking today in regards to the support of H.B. 2444 – The Freedom from Unsafe Restraint and Seclusion Act. Being a parent of a child with a disability, you get to see people for how they really are. And honestly, most people are scared of what they don't know or don't understand. In 2011, my middle child Toby visited her brother Lane at his school. This was when we were in USD 445. She noticed that they had converted what use to be a store room, to what looked like a closet with a door and a lock on it. She was horrified when a student was put into this room, and the child was locked in. I need to add that the door didn't even have a window on it. Toby contacted me immediately in which I did reach out to the school district to question them about this room, which was new in the resource room that Lane had been in, his entire time while at the grade school. While they told me they were checking into it, I also contacted Senator Umbarger. Within in two days of his phone call, not only did the lock come off the door, but the door was taken completely off. It should have to be that before a child is protected, that a parent has to contact their state legislator to get anything done. And what about parents being notified? As involved as I was with USD 445, I was not notified that this room was being added to Lane's classroom. In speaking with Lane, he called it the "naughty" room. And he didn't like talking about it. My daughter witnessed children being put in this room, and crying while school staff laughed. So can you imagine, if you are an 11 or 12 year old child, who happens to have Autism, and maybe you don't speak, the fear you would have being put in a room like this? How would you even be able to communicate this to your parents? What if there was a fire? Would you be forgotten? And even though I spoke to the school I was assured that my son was not put in this room but, my son also is speech delayed. And since he doesn't articulate well, I have to wonder, was he put in this room? I already had a bad experience when he was 8, and his Para-educator admitted to abusing him. It was one of my worst nightmares come true. Of course she was fired immediately, but the damage had been done. How would you feel if this was your child?

So is this what we have come to, to treat our most vulnerable children like animals? Ironic that if a parent was found to discipline their child like this, it would be called abuse but if a school does it, well it is ok. If you treat a person like an animal, they will act like an animal. We need to look at other, more creative and humane ways in regards to how we discipline our children.

I ask you to please support H.B. 2444 – The Freedom from Unsafe Restraint and Seclusion Act to protect our most vulnerable children, to keep them safe from harm, and to know that they are valued by their community as well as by the state they live in.

I thank you for your support of this bill for not only my son Lane, but for the others like him.

Good afternoon. My name is Tammy Dickson and I live in Coffeyville. (USD 445) I apologize for not being there in person but I am a single mom and just got promoted and was not able to rearrange my schedule although I was in Topeka in September and spoke at the SBOE public forum.

My son Lane, is 8 years old and had Down syndrome. He is currently in the 2nd grade and is fully included with Para support. As a parent of a child with a disability I feel that it is imperative that we have a policy in regards to Seclusion and Restraint and not just guidelines. After all, guidelines are just that, more an outline to follow with no accountability. Think of this, if parents did some of the things that some schools do in regards to seclusion and or restraining, it would be called "child abuse" but if a school does it, it is considered a "behavior intervention". I know this seems strong but I am fighting for the rights of my son and many others like him. In May of 2005 my son was abused by his Para *who admitted it!* My worse fear came true when I found this out. And you have to understand that basically my son is non-verbal so it wasn't like he could come home and tell me, "Mommy, someone is hurting me." He was only 6 years old at the time, has no behavior issues and at that time only weighed 32 pounds.

Currently in IDEA there is nothing stated about how Seclusion and Restraint is used? It is up to each individual state to protect their children. Attached, is an email from a parent off of reedmartin.com. All of our children are valuable so please, let's treat them as such. Education is so important to our children. I can tell you that living in a small rural town; public education is the only option for my son. I contacted 3 different parochial schools and even with supports in place; they did not want him. It has been proven that education is the key to any child's success. But children learn not only by what is taught but by example of how teachers treat them or others. And what is proposed will not put a burden on teachers with additional paperwork.

The bottom line should be what is in the best interest of the children. I ask that you please on behalf of my son Lane and the many others like him to support this policy. I then put this question to you, not what would you do if you had a child like mine but what would you be willing to do.

Thank you for your time.

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