



## HIGH PLAINS EDUCATIONAL COOPERATIVE

321 E. Oklahoma

"High Plains Educational Cooperative will assist and support the member districts in providing educational services which will maximize opportunities for all children to live, learn, and work in society." *HPEC Mission Statement*

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To: Chairman Schodorf and Honorable Members of the Senate Education Committee  
From: Gail Gillespie, Director High Plains Educational Cooperative  
Re: House Bill No. 2444 Seclusion and Restraint

Thank you for allowing this written testimony concerning House Bill 2444. I would like to share one story about a child that did experience restraint in our public school system. In the fall of 2007, Erica's mom was shopping for a school setting that would provide some inclusion for her 8-year-old daughter diagnosed with autism, bipolar disorder and intellectual disabilities. Erica had very limited language and what language she had, was Spanish. Because of her lack of communication, Erica often showed her frustration by spitting, biting or kicking others. Mom had to pack her lunch every day because Erica would only eat a limited number of foods. Transportation to school was a challenge for Mom because Erica would kick at the window glass or driver. Helping Erica gain control of her behavior leads to a very positive picture today. She eats in the cafeteria with other students, goes out into the community daily for functional living instruction, is able to travel to a commercial center over 50 miles away to shop, bowl, and eat in a restaurant. She attends computer and P.E. classes with her peers. Her mother is able to hold down a full time job in a neighboring school district and Erica stays with a sitter after school. All of this progress was under the seclusion and restraint guidelines directed by the Kansas State Board of Education and the Kansas Department of Special Services. The guidelines have served the students of Kansas well without litigation. There are avenues of redress available to parents under both IDEA and OCR for grievances regarding the education of their child in the public school setting.

The Kansas State Board of Education adopted guidelines on seclusion and restraint March 2007. Each point in HB #2444 is currently addressed through the current guidelines. No Kansas school children have ever died due to seclusion or restraint, no Kansas school children have been reported to the state as injured in seclusion or restraint since the guidelines were implemented and there have been no substantiated complaints to the Kansas State Department of Education. The Disability Rights Center (DRC) in the past has shared old stories of non-Kansas, non-school incidents for shock value that are not indicative of Kansas educators or schools. The current guidelines meet the needs of Kansas students. Please vote NO on HB #2444.

#26