



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

July 20, 2012

The Honorable Tom Harkin
Chairman
Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Enzi
Ranking Member
Health, Education, Labor & Pension Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators:

We write today on behalf of the Education Task Force of the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities to thank you for holding the hearing last week on alternatives to using restraint and seclusion in schools.

The testimony offered by the witnesses during the hearing, *Beyond Seclusion and Restraint: Creating Positive Learning Environments for All Students*, reinforced that restraint and seclusion are practices that should only be used in emergency situations in which the student's behavior poses an imminent danger of physical injury. The witnesses discussed concrete examples of schools that have shifted from using these practices to preventing and reducing the need for their use through de-escalation techniques, conflict management and evidence-based positive behavioral interventions and supports. The hearing also highlighted that this shift in focus has helped school personnel understand the needs of their students and safely address the source of challenging behaviors, leading to a better result for everyone in the classroom. Finally, the hearing emphasized the critical role of training for teachers in using these positive approaches to keep their students and themselves safe.

The Education Task Force is very pleased to see bipartisan support for examining the issue of restraint and seclusion in schools and their alternatives. We thank you for your leadership, and look forward to continuing to work with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Katy Beh Neas, Easter Seals	202.347.3066	kneas@easterseals.com
Laura Kaloi, National Center for Learning Disabilities	703.476.4894	lkaloi@nclld.org
Cindy Smith, National Disability Rights Network	202.408.9514	cindy.smith@ndrn.org

The Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities is a coalition of over 100 national consumer, advocacy, provider and professional organizations headquartered in Washington, D.C. Since 1973, the CCD has advocated on behalf of people of all ages with physical and mental disabilities and their families. CCD has worked to achieve federal legislation and regulations that assure that the 54 million children and adults with disabilities are fully integrated into the mainstream of society. Approximately 50 national organizations participate in the CCD Education Task Force.