



The Arc of the United States

*People First, Democracy, Visionary Leadership,
Community Participation, Diversity, Integrity and Excellence*

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The Honorable George Miller
Chair, Committee on Education and Labor
U.S. House of Representatives
2205 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

December 22, 2009

Dear Chairman Miller:

On behalf of The Arc, I want to thank you for introducing the Preventing Harmful Restraint and Seclusion in Schools Act of 2009. Seclusion, restraint and other aversive interventions in schools cause unnecessary trauma, injury and death to America's children. Evidence shows that these techniques are used disproportionately on students with disabilities.

The Arc is the world's largest community based organization of and for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It provides an array of services and support for families and individuals and includes over 140,000 members affiliated through more than 780 state and local chapters across the nation. The Arc is devoted to promoting and improving supports and services for all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

The GAO investigation that you requested, the recent report by the National Disability Rights Network, and other research clearly establishes that restraints, seclusion and aversive interventions are harmful and must be prohibited except in true emergency situations. Thank you again for introducing legislation to prevent these harmful practices. The Arc stands ready to assist in enacting legislation that fully protects each student's right to be safe at school.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Berns".

Peter V. Berns, CEO