



# WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P. O. Box 7882 Madison, WI 53707-7882

**For Immediate Release:** January 25, 2010

**Contact:** Senator Julie Lassa 608-266-3123  
Representative Sandy Pasch 608-266-7671

## **Bill Would Limit Use of Seclusion, Restraints in Schools**

*Rep. Pasch, Sen. Lassa introduce bill in wake of coalition report on dangers of the practice*

**MADISON**—Legislation that would limit the use of seclusion and restraint in schools was introduced today by Representative Sandy Pasch (D-Whitefish Bay) and Senator Julie Lassa (D-Stevens Point). Assembly Bill 682 and Senate Bill 468 would facilitate the use of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) as a safer and more effective alternative to seclusion and restraint of children in schools. The proposal restricts dangerous practices in restraining and secluding students, sets standards for training, and requires documentation of incidents and reporting to parents and the Department of Public Instruction.

The lawmakers point to a report that draws attention to the damaging effects of seclusion and restraint. The joint report, released by Disability Rights Wisconsin, WI FACETS, and Wisconsin Family Ties—titled *Out of Darkness...Into the Light: New Approaches to Reducing the Use of Seclusion and Restraint with Wisconsin Children*—outlines the tragic cases of children who have been subject to these disciplinary methods and calls for action to enact policy that addresses the dangerous practice.

“Wisconsin parents and teachers have raised concerns about the use of restraint and seclusion in schools for many years, and this report reveals that restraint and seclusion are harming children’s academic progress and causing serious physical and emotional harm,” said Rep. Pasch. “This legislation will help ensure the well-being of both our most vulnerable citizens and our teachers, making our classrooms safer with better academic outcomes.”

Momentum behind the effort to address this issue is growing across the nation, as at least 20 states have addressed the use of seclusion and physical restraint in statutes or administrative regulations. In light of the death and abuse of students from the use of seclusion and restraint, the U.S. Government Accountability Office recently conducted a review of the use of these methods in public and private schools across the country. In turn, federal legislation has been introduced to regulate the use of seclusion and restraint.

“Student discipline should never cause injury or death,” Sen. Lassa said. “Unfortunately, we have heard from many concerned parents that seclusion and restraint in our schools is being used frequently and inappropriately. Seclusion and restraint are severe behavioral interventions. We believe Wisconsin needs to strengthen its current laws regarding these behavioral interventions so that students and staff aren’t harmed in the classroom.

“Confining and restraining a student should be the last resort in every classroom. This legislation will give educators the necessary training they need to appropriately handle students who experience emotional or behavioral stress in our schools. Everybody in our schools, both students and teachers, deserves to learn and work in a safe environment. I look forward to working with all stakeholders on this legislation to achieve this goal,” she said.

Assembly Bill 682 has been referred to the Assembly Committee on Education and Senate Bill 468 has been referred to the Senate Committee on Education.

###