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**State Senator Sheila Kuehl authors bill to restrict restraint & seclusion of California pupils in schools**

A 10 year old boy with significant disabilities was tied to his wheelchair and left in a school van for much of the school day on two separate occasions. One school built a seclusion room where an 8 year old boy with psychiatric and developmental disabilities was routinely locked away. Other children were dragged by their teachers into seclusion areas and barricaded from leaving.

These are just a few of the more serious findings of a year-long study by PAI's investigations unit of the use of restraint and seclusion of children with disabilities in six California public and non-public schools.

Bill introduced on February 21

In response to this report, Senator Sheila Kuehl introduced a bill (SB 1515) that would prohibit the use of seclusion of pupils in California schools and limit the use of their restraint by educational providers to clearly defined emergency situations and only with adequate safeguards. Educational providers who use behavioral restraint as an intervention would be required to have annual training. The bill also calls for the establishment of a data system to track the use of behavioral restraints.

Senator Kuehl stated, "I was surprised and outraged to discover that these dangerous and damaging practices are still in use in California schools, especially with children who are disabled, and I'm proud to

author what will be the first state law in the nation to comprehensively address the situation."

Report publicly available

Released in June 2007, the 55 page report concluded that in general, school personnel are not complying with existing regulations, but, the heart of the problem is that current law neither explicitly prohibits these practices in schools nor requires adequate reporting and monitoring of their use. (The report, Restraint and Seclusion in Public Schools: A Failing Grade, can be read on the web:

[www.pai-ca.org/pubs/702301.pdf](http://www.pai-ca.org/pubs/702301.pdf))

Leslie Morrison, head of the PAI investigations unit, said that many interventions involving restraint or seclusion of pupils with disabilities had become routine, instead of being reserved for the rare occasion when a pupil was at imminent risk of causing serious harm to him or herself or others.

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