

PRESS RELEASE

National Disability Rights Network Applauds Rep. Miller and GAO for Investigating Disturbing Seclusion & Restraint Practices in Schools

House Committee to Hold Hearing Tuesday on Recently Completed GAO Investigation

WASHINGTON (May 18, 2009) – The National Disability Rights Network (NDRN), which released a startling report in January detailing abuse and deadly use of seclusion and restraint in U.S. schools, applauds U.S. Rep. George Miller (D-CA) for holding a hearing tomorrow to review the findings of a recently completed U.S. Government Accountability Office investigation into the issue.

The full House Committee on Education & Labor, chaired by Rep. Miller, will hold a hearing Tuesday, May 19, at 10 a.m. (2175 Rayburn H.O.B), to review the GAO findings and further examine the issue.

Rep. Miller called for the GAO investigation when NDRN released its national report showing a disturbing use of seclusion and restraint tactics, which resulted in physical and emotional injuries as well as deaths, in U.S. schools affecting students from grades K-12. The report documented cases that range from students being locked in rooms or even boxes for hours to students who were encouraged to release their aggression by wrestling in “WWF Rooms.” Since the report was released, dozens of additional parents and relatives of victims have come forward to share their stories with NDRN.

“We applaud the courageous efforts of Representative Miller and the GAO to further investigate the use of seclusion and restraint in schools,” said Curt Decker, Executive Director, NDRN. “We know this is a problem affecting many students and families across the country. Now, because of Representative Miller and the GAO report, we’re confident further light will be shed on this very important and disturbing issue.”

NDRN previously called for the Obama administration and 111th Congress to ban the use of prone restraint and seclusion under federal law. The group has also called for a national summit to devise plans to implement a ban and encourage the use of evidence-based positive behavioral supports.

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NDRN's report makes several additional recommendations to remedy this growing problem, including providing a specific list of recommendations for state legislatures, boards of education and local school districts.

"Seclusion and prone restraint in schools is a problem that the public and even parents know little about," Decker said. "Our goal is to alert the public and also to provide guidance to key stakeholders on how to quickly resolve the issue."

The NDRN report is a compilation of cases outlined by NDRN's 57-member network of Protection and Advocacy (P&As) systems nationwide. The group works to ensure that people with disabilities are afforded equality of opportunity and are able to fully participate by exercising choice and self-determination.

To view the report in its entirety, please visit www.NDRN.org.

ABOUT NDRN

The National Disability Rights Network (NDRN) is the nonprofit membership organization for the federally mandated Protection and Advocacy (P&A) Systems and Client Assistance Programs (CAP) for individuals with disabilities. Collectively, the P&A/CAP network is the largest provider of legally based advocacy services to people with disabilities in the United States.

Through training and technical assistance, legal support, and legislative advocacy, the National Disability Rights Network works to create a society in which people with disabilities are afforded equality of opportunity and are able to fully participate by exercising choice and self-determination.

The National Disability Rights Network serves a wide range of individuals with disabilities – including, but not limited to, those with cognitive, mental, sensory, and physical disabilities – by guarding against abuse; advocating for basic rights; and ensuring accountability in health care, education, employment, housing, transportation, and within the juvenile and criminal justice systems.

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