

Students with Disabilities Protected from the Use of Unnecessary Restraint and Seclusion

The Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council, LaTEACH, and thousands of parents across Louisiana are very appreciative of Senator Jack Donahue's efforts in championing Senate Bill 59 (Act 328 of 2011). Governor Jindal signed Act 328 to regulate the use of restraint and seclusion for students with disabilities in schools. Parents said their highest priority was for schools to notify them



Witnesses to Governor Jindal signing Act 328 include Mark, Grace and Mary Elizabeth Christian, Christy Cormier, Amanda Serpas, Shawn Fleming, Rebecca Ellis, Sam Beech and Senator Jack Donahue

whenever their child is restrained or secluded. Many parents testified that they discovered their child was being restrained by someone speaking off the record out in the community or by walking into their child's classroom or bus and realizing the common practice of strapping their child into a chair. Act 328 requires school systems to notify parents whenever their child is restrained or placed in seclusion.

In passing Act 328, Louisiana joins 28 other states with policies governing the use of restraint or seclusion in schools and provides Louisiana students with some of the same protections already afforded people in hospitals, nursing homes, community and group homes, mental health facilities, even prisons.

Passage of Act 328 was the result of advocacy efforts by the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council and LaTEACH, the Council's grassroots advocacy network for education. The Council and LaTEACH are grateful for the courageous parents who shared their stories with legislators and educated them on the need for change.

Next steps will involve the Louisiana Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) creating rules to align with provisions in Act 328. Continued advocacy will be needed to educate school systems and parents of how these practices can and cannot be used in schools.