



February 8, 2024

MN House of Representatives Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee

SUBJECT: PRONE RESTRAINT

Dear Chair Moller and Committee Members,

Our organization works with families of children with disabilities in multicultural communities. We are writing to express concern about the proposed language in the new bill addressing the use of force by law enforcement in schools.

We do not believe that any child, under any circumstances, should ever be subjected to “any form of physical holding that restricts or impairs a pupil’s ability to breathe; restricts or impairs a pupil’s ability to communicate distress; places pressure or weight on a pupil’s head throat, neck, chest, lungs, sternum, diaphragm, back or abdomen; or results in straddling a pupil’s torso.” There should not be an exception to this for law enforcement officers.

We are especially concerned about how this exception may affect children with disabilities, who may be especially susceptible to physical injury or unable to communicate distress.

When we have sat in meetings with leadership to discuss the proposal, they have offered “concessions” around training, around the amount of time a child is held in prone restraint, and POST board policies. But to the best of our knowledge there is no evidence that any of these things made any difference to the 38 children who have died as a result of prone restraint.¹

We know the members of this committee care deeply about children. But we do not understand why the legislature would support a bill that prioritizes the wants of law enforcement over the needs of children. That is exactly what this bill does as written. We respectfully ask you to ensure that the ban on the use of prone restraint in schools remains in law and applies to all.

Sincerely,

Multicultural Autism Action Network

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Delia Samuel
Fatima Molas
Maren Christenson Hofer

¹ Nunno, M.A., McCabe, L.A., Izzo, C.V. *et al.* A 26-Year Study of Restraint Fatalities Among Children and Adolescents in the United States: A Failure of Organizational Structures and Processes. *Child Youth Care Forum* **51**, 661–680 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10566-021-09646-w>