

Dear Committee Members:

My name is Anne Erickson, and I am a high school teacher and instructional coach at a school in East St. Paul, MN. I have been a teacher for almost 20 years. Each year, before the students enter my classroom, I consider how I can make them feel safe, seen, and heard. An important part of my thinking, as an educator, is that each child that walks into my classroom is somebody's baby. This applies to any student from preschool through high school, and trust me, I've taught the entire gamut of these age groups. I am not an anomaly when I say that I truly believe the students who walk into my classroom are unique, special, and deserving of love, consideration, and care. This legislation preventing SROs from prone restraint, is our opportunity as a state to show students that this is true; that we see our students as children, as human beings, as people deserving of an educational setting focused on best practices in academics and behavior management, rather than **reactive, harmful, and physical** disciplinary measures.

When parents send their children to school, they trust that educators will keep their students safe. I have been trained, as MANY teachers throughout our state have, in trauma-informed practices, culturally relevant teaching strategies, de-escalation techniques, and various safety measures including crisis prevention intervention strategies. My school empowers me to enact fair, safe, and equitable disciplinary measures, rather than undermining my expertise as an educator by relying on an SRO to police my classroom.

Furthermore, as many schools in Minnesota are embracing the Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) model, schools are focused on preventative measures to counteract student behavior issues and engage in inquiry cycles of continuous improvement. Students are humanized rather than criminalized through educator teams that create intervention strategies that focus on individual student needs. This is what students deserve! Schools that focus on inquiry rather than investigation. Prevention rather than reaction.

This legislation restricts violent and potentially deadly restraints to be used on children and decriminalizes the school setting. To renege and repeal this legislation would be a decision based on fear and unfounded research that policing schools is an effective disciplinary strategy for students.

Thank you for your consideration,

Anne Erickson

Saint Paul Teacher