

For Immediate Release: March 2, 2020

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Survival Coalition Celebrates Governor Evers' Signature on Act 118

The Survival Coalition of Wisconsin Disability Organizations thanks Governor Evers for his signature today on Act 118, the seclusion and restraint bill, that will further ensure students are protected from harmful practices, support schools and keep parents informed.

The bill includes common sense changes to the state's current seclusion and restraint law including requiring schools to report annually to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction about how frequently these practices are occurring and requiring schools to provide a written incident report to parents, (current law only requires that parents be notified that the report exists).

This bill was supported by advocacy organizations, public school organizations, and the Department of Public Instruction. Under current law physical restraint means a restriction that immobilizes or reduces the ability of a pupil to freely move his or her torso, arms, legs, or head; Seclusion means the involuntary confinement of a pupil, apart from other pupils, in a room or area from which the pupil is physically prevented from leaving.

In data reported in the 2013-2014 school year, seclusion and restraint in Wisconsin public schools have been used over 20,000 times with nearly 80% of the incidents happening to students with disabilities. The current law was a good first step in protecting students with disabilities, but changes were needed to the law to continue to reduce the use of seclusion and restraint.

Governor Evers' signature on the bill will help move forward implementation on annual reporting requirements in the coming year.

Survival Coalition is comprised of more than 30 statewide disability organizations that advocate and support policies and practices that lead to the full inclusion, participation, and contribution of people living with disability.

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Investing in People with Disabilities