

February 15, 2024

Sen. Ron Latz, Chair
Sen. Clare Oumou Verbeten, Vice Chair
Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee

Chair Latz, Vice Chair Oumou Verbeten, and Members of the Judiciary & Public Safety Committee,

I am a former school psychologist who is appalled at the idea of authorizing school resource officers, police officers, and security officers to use prone restraints and air restrictive restraints on children in schools. While some portions of SF3534, the SRO bill are fine (such as outlining duties and restrictions on involvement in discipline), NO ONE should be allowed to use these kinds of procedures on students! These restraints are considered too dangerous to use on adults in prison (banned in 2021). How can they be okay for children?

Students of color and students with disabilities tend to receive harsher treatment, possibly as a result of Implicit bias. Students with disabilities in particular are at greater risk of injury, and many have more difficulty communicating distress. Kids should feel safe in school, and testifiers have noted that Minnesota students have been hurt by prone restraints. Restraints do more harm than good and create ongoing trauma for students.

Improved training is helpful but is not always good enough to prevent injury and should not be a reason to back slide on the protections for students passed in the 2023 bill.

The bill should not pass in its current form. It removes any restrictions on SROs in the next two years while a policy is developed. There must be a way to provide immediate clarity for SROs on permissible ways to intervene in difficult situations while completely prohibiting prone restraints and air restrictive restraints in school settings.

The reason to have SROs in schools is safety for students. Please protect our most vulnerable students from dangerous restraints.

Thank you.

Betty Greene, Former Educator
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