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February 4, 2010

The Honorable George Miller
Chair, Committee on Education and Labor
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Miller:

On behalf of the 3.2 million members of the National Education Association, we write to express our appreciation for your efforts to address a most difficult issue, that of ensuring the safety of students, staff, and others in a school setting when student behavior becomes potentially dangerous.

In crafting H.R. 4247, the “Preventing Harmful Restraint and Seclusion in Schools Act,” you have given careful consideration to a range of issues that confront staff as they work to ensure a safe learning environment for all students. Educators know that a positive, effective learning environment leads to successful student outcomes. We strongly support the use of positive behavior supports in schools and are pleased with the professional development aspects of the bill.

We also want to recognize the considerable efforts of advocacy groups representing parents, students with disabilities, and other facets of the education community. We appreciate that we have been welcomed in the development of this bill by all of those working on this critical and emotional issue.

NEA appreciates that the Education and Labor Committee has considered, and continues to consider, our members’ thoughts and ideas on this complex issue. Obviously, we want to avoid crisis situations when the use of restraint or seclusion might become necessary, and we need to be prepared for what can reasonably and safely be done should such a situation arise. We will continue to work through issues around how we plan and ensure that staff actually receive the proper training.

We look forward to a continued dialogue and are hopeful that additional changes can be made as the bill moves forward.

Sincerely,

Kim Anderson
Director of Government Relations

cc: Members, Committee on Education and Labor