

Dear Lawmakers,

I am writing in support of HB 3318-1 and thank you for your consideration in hearing what our daily life in school involves.

In the fall of 2009, I was assigned to work with a 14 year old student with severe autism. The student was of an adult weight of about 160 lbs and much taller than my 5'3" frame.

I was told by a former para-pro, "She bites." School records indicated a habitual biter from age 5.

September 14, 2009, I was bitten on my left forearm. I was in shock, shaking and my arm was bruised and bloody. I was treated on-site at the school health clinic.

Again, on September 30, 2009, I was bit on the right upper arm. Again, I visited the school clinic. I was extremely stressed and again went into shock. I began having nightmares and did not want to return to work. My stomach churned and my husband suggested I quit my job. By this time this student was baring teeth at me, grabbing at my limbs and chasing me around the classroom. The student screamed a blood curdling scream that sounded like a panther when upset. Shivers ran down my spine and adrenaline rushed through my body. Now, please note that there are other students in the very same room that hear or witness the incidents. They too are of special needs, either physical or academic.

October 12, 2009 I received my third bite to the inner aspect of my right forearm. I received two puncture wounds from the student's teeth. I received an antibiotic which I took and also received a tetanus shot the same day. My doctor measured and documented the injury during my visit. A claim was submitted to S.A.I.F.. Seven months later the bite scars were still visible.

October 15, 2009, the students lunged at me, snapping their teeth. The next day the student attempted to scratch me. When I attempted to move the student to another area, the student kicked me in the knee.

When I discussed all these issues and how traumatic they were to me, I was told that as a public school, "We must accept students in whatever condition they arrive." But then said, we do not have to keep them. This was NOT my experience. The student's parents disallowed us to send the student home for biting. They insist this has been tried and the student's behavior escalated in aggression at school after being sent home the day before.

November 17, 2009. I witnessed this student bite another students fingers. Staff protected the victim from more serious injury.

November 25, 2009. During transport in a school district vehicle, this student began to body slam the seat in front of her. The student leaned forward and raked the neck of student #2, who was a non-verbal student. I pulled student #2 forward to lesson the

chances of a second attack. Meanwhile the student put their foot almost to the headrest in attempts to kick student #2. The student kicked the seat violently. I moved closer to the victim to try to protect them better and would rather take the attack than the student hurt #2.

December 2, 2009. This student stood and lunged over an oblong work table toward me teeth bared. I deflected hand blows and told her to sit. Three minutes later, the student scratched me.

December 3, 2009, there were four incidents at the swimming pool. While in the pool the student lunged at a pool staff member walking near poolside. The student was asked to swim at a different direction, but student kept swimming toward other students. Suddenly the student started swimming rapidly toward a specific student. The coach tried to intervene and other student swam as fast as possible, however the student chasing caught up and attempted to bite. The coach jumped in to separate them. The other student, traumatized, scared, and upset exited the pool and moved away. The student got out of pool and starting chasing again. Again, more staff intervened. As staff attempted to help student change clothes, the student lunged at me.

All efforts to protect myself via the Special Ed Director were deflected as student needs were discussed. I was told, that I could be considered as insubordinate for refusing to work with this student. Help! When does staff safety matter? Please be a part of making a difference in the other student's lives and workers like me that do this for the love of these children, only to feel unsafe and stressed to walk in the door!

Respectfully submitted,

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Autism Spectrum Specialist