

To: Chair Roblan and Members of the Senate Education Committee  
From: Ruth Creek  
Job Position: Special Education Paraprofessional, Ontario School District  
Re: Support for HB 3318

Dear Sen. Arnie Roblan,

I have been seriously injured multiple times by students I work with. The first incident resulted in a concussion, whiplash/neck trauma and anxiety/panic attacks. I still deal with panic attacks a year and a half after the incident.

The second incident happened when it took three staff members to change a kindergartner's diaper because she became violent. I was holding her feet, trying to get her shoes off so she wouldn't hurt us. Her feet got away from me, and both of them came down with force onto my wrist which created a contusion, tendinitis and tendinosis.

Immediately following the incident, I notified my principal and special education teachers, who were all extremely supportive. Our district is adamant that they cannot help the child unless the incident reports are filled out.

Yet, I do not feel adequately supported or trained to avoid injuries in the future. The restraint training we receive (which is state approved) is not appropriate for when students go into a rage. In those situations, the student has super strength and the restraints are not sufficient. And although staff members who work with these students all carry a radio to call for help, this does not mean help is available because our special education department is understaffed.

We need better restraint training. Students who become violent on a daily basis get tired and their behaviors become more agitated by the end of the day. These behaviors are not only hard on staff but also terrifying for other classmates. Being worried about getting hurt does not lead to a good learning environment.

At the school where I work, many staff members pray together so they will not get hurt that day. It seems wrong that we have to work under these conditions.

Respectfully submitted,

-- Ruth Creek