Testimony
Senate Bill No. 1318
January 15, 2021
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Mr. Chairman and members of the committee:

My name is Ashly Wolsky and I am the Special Education Director for East Central Special Education in New Rockford, ND. Our special education cooperative serves the surrounding communities of: Carrington, Fessenden-Bowdon, Kensal, New Rockford-Sheyenne, Oberon, and Pingree-Buchanan. This is my third year serving as a Director for East Central, previously I taught in the Fargo Public Schools for 13 years as a special education teacher for students with emotional disturbance. I am here to provide information regarding the restraint and seclusion Senate Bill No. 1318 in North Dakota.

As a special education teacher in Fargo, I worked closely with our classroom teachers, students, parents, counselors, principals, school psychologists, doctors and police to ensure the safety or our students and staff on a daily basis. At times restraint and seclusion was needed due to out of control behavior and physical violence in the school settings. I can confidently state the current training and policies that were in place ensured the safety for all students and staff. Below you will find a picture of the destruction to my classroom by one of students, unfortunately this happened on a daily basis if not more. Students with emotional disturbances have difficulty self-regulating and they depend on the adults around them to provide a safe environment, which at time includes restraint and seclusion. I often had parents ask “why do

you let my child destroy your classroom?" and my response was "stuff is stuff, and it can be replaced." I have sat in IEP meetings with parents requesting restraint and seclusion to ensure the safety of their child, other students, and staff.

Switching gears to my current role as Director, I can successfully share with you today we have not needed restraint or seclusion for the last 3 years, across 6 school districts. Our Unit successfully completed Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI) yesterday and we follow our local restraint and seclusion policies even though they are not needed on daily basis. To be honest, it has taken the last 3 years to recover from the out-of-control behavior and physical outbursts that I encountered on a daily basis while teaching in Fargo.

In conclusion, I do not support the state mandating that local school districts to adopt a restraint and seclusion policy. Rather, I believe that if a district determines a need for a restraint and seclusion policy, they will adopt one. In the end, all districts are required to adopt a policy on restraint and seclusion. I am asking that you leave it at that---without all the definitions and parameters that are listed in this bill proposal. Further for this bill in particular the last statements regarding 'required professional development' are quite extensive and would be expensive in terms of time and resources to carry out as indicated by each school district. I do not oppose the topics or the need for training in those areas, but please do not mandate it without funds in order to carry it out.