

**HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE**  
**HOUSE BILL 327: PUBLIC SCHOOLS—SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS—**  
**PROHIBITED CONDUCT**

**FEBRUARY 5, 2020**

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

My name is Gloria Merritt and I'm writing this letter on behalf of my son. My son has been traumatized this school year by the actions taken by the SRO at General John Stricker Middle School. My son is an eleven year-old sixth grade student with multiple disabilities, including autism. My son was handcuffed at school and held down on the hard floor for over 30 minutes. I saw the video; it was heartbreaking to watch and it brought me to tears. My son had to go to the emergency room the next day. He had an x-ray taken and it showed that his right hand was fractured from the handcuffing and restraint. Now he has Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and will be going to therapy at the trauma center at Kennedy Krieger. He is afraid to go back to school and takes Zoloft as a result. I think School Resource Officers and police officers should be prohibited from getting involved in routine school discipline matters. If this were the case, the SRO wouldn't have gotten involved with my son in the first place and my son wouldn't have been subject to a traumatic restraint and handcuffing incident that resulted in injury. Schools shouldn't feel like jails and students shouldn't have their disability-related behaviors criminalized. So let's take a stand now and put a stop to harmful police action in schools. **I support HB 327.**

Sincerely,

Gloria Merritt  
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