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Senate Bill 577/Public Schools – Self Contained Special Education Classrooms Use of Video Recording Devices

POSITION: Support with Amendments

Ways and Means Committee

1/27/2022

My name is Andrea L. Smedley Hasty, I am the grandmother of an Autistic Grandson, Josiah D. Hasty and I am in support of SB577 with amendments. This bill is important to me because Josiah, now age 8, was abused at age 4 in the Prince Georges County Public School System and at age 6 at a Private School, the Children's Guild in Hyattsville, Maryland.

Josiah is Verbal but cannot articulate the events of the school day. To date we are still awaiting evidence of and paperwork relating to his abuse/injuries. Though Josiah could not articulate his abuse/injuries he did act out in other ways to let us know that he felt in danger. Josiah's great-grandparents live near the Children's Guild and he would have crying and yelling fits if we went in the direction of their home thinking that he had to go to school, he would also fight us when trying to get him to even get out of the car in both instances to go in school after such abuse/injuries took place! Josiah is currently under the care of a Psychologist to deal with his trauma and was removed from the Children's Guild due to such and was about to have a teacher come to our home until the investigation was concluded; however, COVID-19 happened, and everyone went Virtual. (We are still in litigation for such.)

Several years later we are still awaiting proper documentation from the incidents that occurred in Prince Georges County School System.

If there had been cameras in the classrooms then the answers to our Who, What, When How, and Why's could have quickly been answered and it would have alleviated the trauma, stress, and abundance of money on legal fees to assure Josiah's safety.

As a parent/grandparent we should not have to worry about the Safety of our children when at school.

I am asking that you PLEASE SUPPORT THIS SENATE BILL 577 to ensure the future Safety of Josiah and ALL CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS. SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN NEED THE VOICE THAT THEY DON'T HAVE TO ENSURE SAFETY, PROTECTION AND A PROPER AND FAIR EDUCATION!!!

Thank you for your time and support!

Andrea L. Smedley Hasty