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AG Balderas Endorses HB 75 to Limit Restraint & Seclusion in New Mexico Schools

Balderas asks the House Education Committee to pass the legislation critical to the safety of special needs children

Santa Fe, NM – As a father and as the chief law enforcement officer in the State of New Mexico, Attorney General Hector Balderas announced this morning that he supports HB 75 to limit school restraint and seclusion in New Mexico schools. More than 1100 students were subjected to restraint at school during the 2015-16 school year in New Mexico, and students with disabilities account for 76% of all restraints and out-of-school suspensions in New Mexico public schools, while they comprise just 14% of the student body.

“It’s unacceptable that restraint and seclusion in our schools are unregulated by any law, but HB 75 will fix that by keeping both students and teachers safe from injury or harm,” said Attorney General Balderas. “I respectfully ask the House Education Committee to pass HB 75 today, and I respectfully request that the rest of the body support this legislation as well to help protect our students with disabilities across New Mexico.”

Students with disabilities are more likely to be injured by physical discipline including bruising, seizures, anxiety and depression, and studies show that restraint and seclusion do not improve challenging behaviors.

HB 75 sets limits on using restraint and seclusion in schools, would inform parents and administration officials when students are restrained or secluded, and imposes the same limitations already in place in New Mexico children’s mental health facilities.

HB 75 is sponsored by Representative Deborah Armstrong and Representative Jim Smith.

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