

Dear Alan Misbach,

I am greatly concerned about the coercive restraint therapy that has gone on for so long in Utah. I strongly oppose any bill that supports this kind of intrusive therapy. I support HB5 to prohibit coercive restraint therapy.

I have my own personal experiences with this type of therapy. About nine years ago, while I was living in a foster home in Utah, I had to endure a session of this restraint therapy. To this day I still struggle from the effects of this therapy.

The therapists started off holding me tight. They kept encouraging me to cry. I didn't feel like crying and therefore couldn't just cry on cue. I was then told to lay on my stomach. One of the therapists then lay on top of me. I felt like I was being smothered and told the therapist so. Instead of getting off of me, the therapist then had my foster dad lay on top of him. Having two men lay on top of me didn't cause me to cry, but I did have an even more difficult time breathing and had to gasp for breath. This went on for at least a half hour. Finally, afraid that I would be suffocated, I started to let out a fake cry. This, to my relief, worked and the men got off of me.

I still struggle with the effects of being violated on that day. I hate to be in too tight of spaces and sometimes feel like I need to gasp for breath if I am enclosed in too tight spaces for too long, like elevators, subways, etc. I have absolutely no positive effects from coercive restraint therapy, if anything it made me angry. I have never liked being forced to do something against my will.

Trying to force any child, especially an abused child, to cry by holding them tight against their will is damaging to the healing process. Every child deserves a therapy that will allow them to deal with their abuse at their own pace. No child can be forced to overcome their issues from being abused.

Thank you for supporting HB5 so that no more children will have to go through this intrusive therapy. Two children have already died as a result of this therapy. And I am sure there are many more people besides me who have suffered the negative effects of this therapy.

You have my permission to post this letter on your website, name and all so that others can be made aware of the risks involved in coercive restraint therapy.

Sincerely,

Heather Key