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Florida Representative Bobby DuBose Receives Superhero Award for Bill Eliminating Seclusion and Limiting Restraints for Children with Disabilities

FT. LAUDERDALE - In recognition of his leadership and multi-year support for eliminating seclusion and limiting physical restraints on children with disabilities in public schools (**HB 149**), American Children's Campaign recently presented a Superhero Protector of Children Award to Florida **Representative Bobby DuBose (D- Fort Lauderdale)**. The Superhero awards are reserved for people who envision and/or lead transformational change for children.

"The common denominator for receiving a Superhero award is the large-scale transformative change that can be achieved," explained **Roy Miller**, president of American Children's Campaign. "It recognizes system reform that fundamentally changes children's lives for the better."

Florida currently averages over 8,500 incidents of physical restraints being used on children in public schools annually. Most restraints were on young children (Pre-K – 3rd grade). This bill limits the use of manual restraint techniques requiring "significant force" to emergency situations where it is necessary to protect the safety of the student or others. The bill also places crisis intervention plans into statute and mandates they be developed after the second time a child is restrained within a semester.

The seclusion tactics eliminated by the bill are defined as "the involuntary confinement of a student in a room or area alone and preventing the student from leaving the room or area." The bill does not consider a time-out as seclusion.

As an alternative to seclusion and restraint, the bill directs schools to adopt policies and procedures promoting positive behavior interventions and support. The bill also places crisis intervention plans into statute and mandates they be developed for students who are restrained more than once in a semester.

“Seclusion and restraints are traumatizing, especially to children with disabilities who are among the most vulnerable,” stated **Representative DuBose**. “I’m very pleased we were able to finally carry this good legislation over the finish line this year. Thankfully, this dangerous and ineffective practice will not happen in Florida schools anymore.”

The Superhero Award is not reserved for public officials. Most recipients have been private citizens or advocates who have envisioned innovations such as children’s health insurance, civil citations, new strategies to intervene in child trafficking and more. To date, 13 Superhero awards have been distributed in American Children’s Campaign’s 29-year history.

About American Children’s Campaign

Founded in 1992, American Children’s Campaign is a non-partisan, non-profit organization that initiates systemic reform for Florida’s children through responsive public education campaigns and responsible public policy. The organization engages diverse citizens, stakeholders and experts in consensus-oriented dialogue, establishes a policy framework with specific recommendations, and then takes action while stressing accountability. More information about American Children’s Campaign is available at iamforkids.org.

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