

EAGLE VILLAGE

WHERE POTENTIAL SOARS

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December 5, 2025

Representative Luke Meerman
Chair House Oversight committee on Child Welfare
N-1193 House Office Building
PO Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909

Representative Meerman,

I am Benjamin Brandt, Director of Day Treatment at Eagle Village. I am a former leader of a nonprofit; I am also a combat Veteran, US Army. I returned home from my combat tour in 2020 with PTSD. I am trauma informed through firsthand experience. I joined this line of work to help children struggling like me.

In the last 3 years that I have worked in this field, I have been punched no less than 75 times, bitten, spit on, kicked, stabbed, and choked multiple times. Every one of these happened after genuine, good-faith de-escalation attempts. Every one of these was followed up with restorative conversation and forgiveness.

My complaint is NOT that I have been assaulted. My complaint is that I have no meaningful way of teaching them that assault is not okay. I bled for my country overseas, and I am willing to bleed for these children in my care. If taking a punch, bite, or kick from a child is a necessary price for their healing, I will gladly pay it. My complaint is that after paying that price, I have no meaningful way to teach them that assaulting another human being is wrong. I cannot teach them because current regulations prevent me from responding with reasonable consequences. I cannot even send a child to their room because it is deemed "seclusion" and therefore illegal.

After assaulting me and my peers, our students never receive a consequence beyond the mere loss of an incentive and a stern talking to. Youth are rarely prosecuted legally for their assaults against staff and never prosecuted quickly. As a result, your state wards learn that they can assault their fellow humans and nothing bad or uncomfortable will happen to them. This is dangerous for them and harmful to our society. You must rewrite your regulations such that we can communicate to our children with meaningful consequences that violence will not be tolerated.

Respectfully,



Benjamin Brandt
Director of Day Treatment

