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Chairman Ott and members of the Assembly Judiciary Committee:

I am writing today to ask that you **not support AB 693**, the so-called “Teacher Protection Act”. As a former educator who spent nearly three decades working specifically with children labeled Emotionally and Behaviorally Disordered, I can tell you with confidence that this bill is not the right way to ensure teacher and student safety.

Having worked with Rep. Thiesfeldt on the Assembly Education Committee, **I understand and agree with his intentions**. We absolutely do need to do more to protect our teachers. With all that we ask teachers to do on a daily basis, they should not have to worry about their personal safety on top of everything else. **However, I am extremely concerned that this bill will have many negative effects** on teachers, students, parents, and school staff.

It gives an educator a predetermined negative impression of a student they may not have even met, which could then negatively impact the way that educator interacts with that student in the classroom. Kids with disabilities or unique needs have a hard enough time being accepted and getting equitable treatment in school. They don’t need us to make it any more difficult for them.

This bill would also disrupt the chain of communication between teachers, principals, and school districts. Many districts already have a relationship with their schools that is working and allows their educators a space to communicate safety concerns. If they do not, then that should be concerning to the district and community, but it is not our place as a state to intervene with broad legislation that affects all 422 districts in the state.

I want to thank you for taking an interest as a committee in teacher safety. This is a crucial issue, and I wholeheartedly agree that our educators deserve more respect. However, this bill will not provide that, and will only make things worse. It is not supported by disability rights experts, educators, school districts, school boards, or any other education advocates. **Please do not bring AB 693 to a vote. If you feel it must be brought to a vote, please vote against it.**

If you truly want to support teachers and keep them out of harm’s way, I encourage you to explore more supportive, positive options. It is not “coddling” or taking the issue lightly – it is following demonstrated evidence that punishment and negative reinforcement do not change behavior.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit my thoughts and concerns on this bill. Please feel free to contact me anytime if you have any questions or would like to discuss this issue further.

Sincerely,

Rep. Dave Considine