

## **MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT**

A.1166 (Epstein) / S.900 (Brisport)

The New York Association on Independent Living (NYAIL) is a statewide, not-for-profit membership association, created by and composed of Independent Living Centers across New York State. Independent Living Centers are unique disability-led, cross-disability, locally administered, not-for-profit organizations, providing advocacy and support to people with disabilities of all ages to live independently and fully integrated into their communities. NYAIL strongly supports Andre's Law, A.6346 (Epstein) / S.900 (Brisport).

Andre's Law is named in honor of Andre McCollins, a survivor of aversive conditioning. Andre was diagnosed with a neurodevelopmental disorder and sent to an out-of-state Department of Education approved facility as a teenager. He was subjected to aversive conditioning there until he was hospitalized after being tied to a board and electro-shocked thirty-one times over seven hours.

This legislation would prohibit New York State from financially supporting, and sending children to, institutions that employ electro-shock and other aversive therapies. Aversive conditioning or therapy is the practice of repeatedly and intentionally inducing pain or discomfort in an attempt to alter a person's behavior. Most US states have already completely banned the use of aversive conditioning.

In 2005, New York banned aversive conditioning within the borders of New York State. However, New York state agencies are still sending disabled children to out-of-state facilities that use electro-shock and other forms of aversive conditioning.

Andre's Law would close this loophole by legally requiring New York State to cease funding, operating, licensing, or approving any programs, agencies, or facilities that use aversive conditioning.

New York should not allow a loophole that harms disabled children.