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From the Baltimore Sun

Letters to the Editor

February 8, 2007

Need for restraint a treatment failure

I am writing in response to two articles in the Maryland section Friday: "Restraint called common at school" (Feb. 2) and "Disabled center's closure debated" (Feb. 2).

Although it might not be immediately apparent, these alarming articles have something in common.

They are about practices that over the years have been widely accepted as "necessary" for the treatment of our citizens with cognitive, physical or emotional disabilities - restraint and segregation.

I want to be sure all Marylanders understand that this is a harmful and scary myth. The continual use of restraint is not treatment; it is the failure of treatment.

The use of restraint over and over is not OK and should never be accepted as common.

Everyone deserves to be supported in ways that do not risk safety or take away rights.

Positive, community-based treatment works.

Twelve states in this country have closed all state-run institutions for the disabled.

The time has come for Maryland to do the same thing.

*Denise Marshall
Millersville*

The writer is a program manager for Leaders in Disability Policy.