



Action Alert #6

LDH Budget & Seclusion and Restraint Up for Discussion Next Week

March 19, 2025

Next week, advocates have two opportunities to share valuable feedback with policymakers about:

- The Louisiana Department of Health's (LDH) proposed budget for Fiscal Year 26 (FY26)
- The seclusion and restraint special education audit.

Issue 1 – Senate Finance to Discuss LDH Budget

On Tuesday, March 25th, the Senate Finance Committee will discuss LDH's FY26 proposed budget at 9:30 AM ([Agenda](#)). The Council and LaCAN will be advocating for the following budget issues this session:

1. [Restore Funding for Families Helping Families Regional Resource Centers](#)
 - During the last four legislative sessions, an additional \$500,000 in state general fund (SGF) was added to the Council's budget specifically for FHF Centers. This brought the total SGF to \$1,007,517. Unfortunately, the Council's budget request for FY26 was cut by \$500,000 leaving these Center's in an unfortunate situation. Total SGF needed is \$1,007,517 which is a standstill budget for the Centers.
2. [Protect Disability Services](#)
 - Just a few months ago, Louisiana was facing a fiscal cliff that was sure to impact disability services. Fortunately, it appears the fiscal cliff for FY 26 has been addressed, but there are many unknowns that could change this outlook. It is important for advocates to continue educating policymakers about the importance of disability services and how your life may be impacted if these services were cut or reduced.

How to Take Action

Share your personal story with the Senate Finance Committee and explain how you or someone you know has been impacted by FHF Centers and/ or would like to discuss the importance of protecting disability services.

Email or call the Chair and members of the Senate Finance Committee before they meet on Tuesday, March 25th.

- Find the contact information for the Chair and committee members by clicking [HERE](#).
- With your comments, please include your name, address, phone number, email address, and let them know the specific issue(s) you are writing about.
- Don't forget to thank the Chair and members for considering the needs of the disability community.

Email sfnce@legis.la.gov your public comments by Monday, March 24th.

- With your comments, please include your name, address, phone number, email address, and let them know the specific issue(s) you are writing about.
- Don't forget to thank the committee for considering the needs of the disability community.

Attend Yellow Shirt Day

- Tuesday, March 25th at 9:30 AM
- Louisiana State Capitol – Senate Committee Room A-B
- Be sure to arrive early so you can get a seat in the committee room

You can also watch the committee meeting(s) live from the [legislature's website](#). When the meeting is in progress, click the camera icon to access the broadcast.

Issue 2 – Seclusion and Restraint Audit to be Discussed by SEAP

On Wednesday, March 26th, at 9:30 AM the Special Education Advisory Panel (SEAP) is scheduled to discuss the Seclusion and Restraint [Audit](#) released in December ([Agenda](#)). The audit highlighted many concerns advocates have shared with the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) over the years and clearly shows how the lack of monitoring and oversight of special education services has left students with disabilities vulnerable to abuse and neglect. SEAP is expected to review the audit findings and make recommendations to address areas of concern.

A few questions to consider:

- Do you feel LDOE should provide more oversight and monitoring to schools and districts when it comes to seclusion and restraints?
- Do you feel the use of seclusion and restraint in the classrooms is underreported?
- Do you feel more consequences are needed for school teachers and staff who mistreat students and/or improperly use seclusion and restraint?
- Do you feel LDOE needs to provide better oversight and guidance to school districts regarding policies on the use and installation of cameras in classrooms?

If you answered “Yes” to any of these questions, SEAP needs to hear from you!

How to Take Action

Attend Yellow Shirt Day and share before the panel your personal experiences, thoughts, ideas and recommendations on how to address concerns in the audit.

- Wednesday, March 26th at 9:30 AM
- Claiborne Building – Thomas Jefferson Room 1-136
1201 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802

The meeting will also be livestreamed [here](#) if you are unable to attend in person.

Email SEAP and Co-Chair Ronnie Morris before the committee meets on Wednesday, March 26th.

- SEAP - specialeducation@la.gov
- Co-Chair Ronnie Morris – Ronnie.Morris@la.gov
- With your comments, please include your name, address, phone number, email address, and let them know the specific issue(s) you are writing about (Seclusion & restraint Audit).
- Don't forget to thank the Co-Chair and panel members for supporting the needs and interests of students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).

If you need help with any of the issues listed in this alert, attending Yellow Shirt Day or providing testimony, please contact your [LaCAN Leader](#).

Save the Date

The House Appropriations Committee is expected to receive a presentation from LDH about their proposed FY26 budget on April 8th. Public Testimony will also be held in Appropriations on April 15th. Stay tuned for more information about Yellow Shirt Days and how you can reach out to committee members!

Confirm Your Action

- Email your [LaCAN Leader](#) after you take action
- Why confirm your action? This helps the Council know how effective we are reaching you with important information and engaging members across our state in advocacy for systems change.

Tips & Tools for Advocacy

Looking for tips and tools to help you in your advocacy? Check out the Council's [Advocacy 101](#) page. You can also find tips for:

- [Writing/emailing your legislators](#)
- [Calling your legislators](#)
- [Writing your story](#)

Contact Us

LaCAN is an initiative of the LA Developmental Disabilities Council. If there are any questions about the information in this email, contact the Council by replying to this email, or calling the toll free number listed below:

phone: 1-800-450-8108

email: info@laddc.org

website: www.lacanadvocates.org

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