

8/30/05

Dear Member of Congress,

The undersigned individuals and organizations strongly encourage you to support H.R. 1790 *The Child Medication Safety Act*. This act would prohibit government school personnel from requiring a child to obtain a prescription for a controlled substance or a psychotropic drug as a condition of attending school or receiving services.

Here are a few key reasons out of many that this legislation is so important:

1. **Children are already being coercively screened and medicated; and some children have died as a result.** Aliah Gleason, a 13-year-old Texas girl, was forced into a state mental hospital, denied contact with her family for 5 months, restrained more than 26 times, and treated with at least 12 different psychiatric medication, some simultaneously, all as a result of a school “mental health” screening. Matthew Smith and Shaina Dunkle died of psychiatric medication toxicity after their parents were coerced with threats of child abuse charges by schools if they did not medicate their children.
2. **The poorest and most vulnerable, including minority children, are most often forced by the state onto these psychotropic pharmaceuticals.** Over 60% of foster children in Texas, nearly two-thirds in Massachusetts, and 55% of foster children in Florida are on as many as 16 different psychiatric drugs, starting as young as age 3. The NAACP has recently reported to Congress that, “In fact, a recent study in the state of New York showed that ‘minority boys’ are 11 times more likely to be on mind-altering medicines than is the general student body.”
3. **Children are already being diagnosed and medicated at alarming rates and at very young ages.** More money was spent on psychiatric drugs for children in 2003 than on antibiotics or asthma medication. There was a 300% increase the in the psychiatric drugging of two to four year old children between 1991 and 1995.
4. **The medications being used in children are in many cases ineffective and dangerous, causing serious, sometimes lethal, side effects.** The FDA has recently admitted, finally, that these antidepressant drugs are no more effective than a sugar pill in treating pediatric depression and that over two thirds of studies, some kept from physicians and the public for years, and show a clear link between these drugs and suicide and violence. FDA has now mandated that “black-box” warnings detailing these dangers be placed on certain antidepressant packaging. Drugs said to treat attention-deficit disorder have been found by the Surgeon General and leading textbooks to have no long-term beneficial effect on either academic achievement or social skills; and to be linked to psychosis, heart and liver toxicity, and cognitive toxicity. The FDA recently announced plans to strengthen the warnings on these stimulant drugs. Some so-called “antipsychotic” drugs have been linked to obesity and diabetes.

Detailed quotes and references substantiating all of these points in written Congressional testimony and congressional staff briefing documents by Dr. Karen Effrem are available at <http://icspp.org/content/view/69/44/> and <http://edaction.org/2005/021405.htm> .

Thank you again for your consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Clinical Social Work Federation
U.S. Bill of Rights Foundation
International Center for the Study of Psychiatry and Psychology
American Policy Center

Drug Policy Alliance Network
Association of American Physicians and Surgeons
Eagle Forum
Republican Liberty Caucus
Gun Owners of America

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