

Mental Health Watchdog on a Crusade to Protect Children from Illegal Baker Acts

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CLEARWATER, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES, August 14, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Citizens Commission on Human Rights \(CCHR\)](#), a non-profit mental health watchdog dedicated to the protection of children, has reached over 184,000 families in a campaign to stop the illegal Baker Acting of children in Florida.

The Florida chapter of CCHR is on a crusade to prevent unjust involuntary psychiatric examination of children without parental knowledge. Educating families on their rights at hundreds of local events, CCHR also hosts free seminars delivered by a local attorney on the mental health law at their headquarters located in downtown Clearwater.

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Diane Stein, President of CCHR Florida

The mental health law in Florida, commonly known as the [Baker Act](#), allows for the initiation of an involuntary psychiatric examination of anyone no matter their age and this includes children as young as two years of age.

“We receive calls on a weekly basis from the parents of children that have been Baker Acted without their knowledge,” said Diane Stein, President of CCHR Florida. “This is a violation of the rights of the child and the parent.”

Seen as a statewide crisis, 32,763 involuntary examinations were initiated on children during 2016-2017 according to a report recently released by the Baker Act Reporting Center. [1]

Taking action to stop this abuse, CCHR began educating families on their rights in 2016 and has reached over 184,000 families with information on the Baker Act as well as providing them with a form designed to help prevent unjust involuntary examination. The form, created by attorneys, makes it clear that the parent is not relinquishing their parental rights and also clearly states that the parent is not giving permission for a psychiatric examination of their child for any purpose. This statement is based on Chapter 394.463 of the Florida Statutes, which reads as follows: "Without care or treatment, the person is likely to suffer from neglect or refuse to care for himself or herself; such neglect or refusal poses a real and present threat of substantial harm to his or her well-being; and it is not apparent that such harm may be avoided through the help of willing family members or friends or the provision of other services."



Who Speaks for the Child?

INVOLUNTARY COMMITMENT of MINORS
Parents or legal guardians should be given the opportunity to take full responsibility for their child, as stated in the Baker Act criteria, for the purpose of obtaining consent for a voluntary examination **prior** to Baker Acting.

The Baker Act Criteria clearly allows for a person to be assisted through the help of willing family members or friends or the provision of other services **instead** of being Baker Acted.

It's the parent's right to be a voice for their child. This is **NOT** being done. The parent finds out **AFTER** their child has been Baker Acted.

Protect Children's Rights and Ensure Parental Involvement

Citizens Commission On Human Rights
Call 800.782.2878, for more information
www.cchrflorida.org



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“The criteria for involuntary examination clearly allows for a parent or legal guardian to be given the opportunity to care for their child yet this fundamental right is being stripped away,” said Stein.

Concerned parents are encouraged to contact CCHR to learn more about their rights under the law at 800-782-2878 and to sign a [petition](#) asking Florida lawmakers to amend the Baker Act.

About CCHR: Initially established by the Church of Scientology and renowned psychiatrist Dr. Thomas Szasz in 1969, CCHR’s mission is to eradicate abuses committed under the guise of mental health and enact patient and consumer protections. L. Ron Hubbard, founder of Scientology, first brought psychiatric imprisonment to wide public notice: “Thousands and thousands are seized without process of law, every week, over the ‘free world’ tortured, castrated, killed. All in the name of ‘mental health,’” he wrote in March 1969. For more information visit www.cchrflorida.org.

Source:

[1] Fiscal Year 2016/2017 Annual Report

<http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/samh/publications/The%20Baker%20Act%20-%20FL%20MH%20Act%20-%20FY%2016-17%20Annual%20Report%20-%20Released%20June%202018.pdf>

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The headquarters for CCHR Florida are located in downtown Clearwater



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