

Mental Health Watchdog Warns Officials on Baker Act Rights Abuses

With reports stating that the number of citizens being Baker Acted is rising, CCHR is cautioning lawmakers to pay heed to the potential for misuse and abuse.

CLEARWATER, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES, August 15, 2018

/EINPresswire.com/ -- With reports surfacing that the number of citizens being Baker Acted is on the rise following the school shooting in Parkland, the [Citizens Commission on Human Rights](#) (CCHR) is cautioning those charged with executing an involuntary psychiatric examination to pay heed to the potential for misuse and abuse. [1]

Florida Children at Risk

INVOLUNTARY COMMITMENT of MINORS

In 2005-2006 the Florida Senate published an Interim Project Report clarifying the Baker Act requirements. The alarming concern was that children were being held in receiving facilities for extended periods of time. It was not until 2017, that the mental health act was amended to expedite the examination of children from 72 hours to 12 hours.

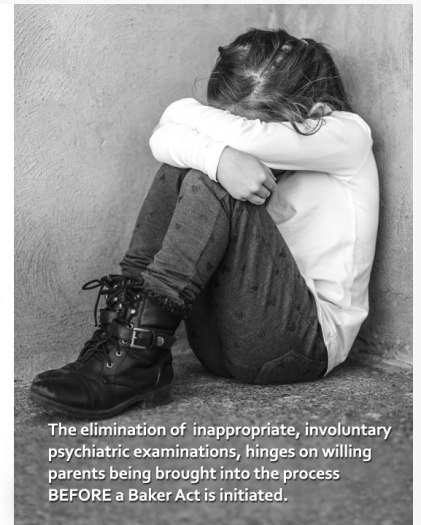
Since publication of the Senate Report, over 295,000 minors, some as young as 5, were sent for involuntary examination – many taken from their school without parental knowledge of the initiation.

A significant percentage did not meet the criteria of the Florida Statute for Baker Acting in the first place, thus, inappropriate involuntary psychiatric commitment.



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

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The elimination of inappropriate, involuntary psychiatric examinations, hinges on willing parents being brought into the process BEFORE a Baker Act is initiated.

During fiscal year 2015/2016 there were 194,354 involuntary [Baker Act](#) examinations in Florida. This figure is more than double the number of men, women and children who were Baker Acted during fiscal year 2001/2002 and is significantly more than the 21.80 percent change in Florida's population over the same time period.

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The number of Baker Acts where a person, especially a child, never met the criteria for an involuntary psychiatric examination is disturbingly high and we are demanding that something be done.”

Diane Stein, President of CCHR Florida

This alarming increase prompted CCHR, a mental health watchdog organization that investigates and exposes human rights violations in the mental health industry, to issue a warning to state officials on the abusive use of the Baker Act law as illustrated by hundreds of complaints received by CCHR from Floridians across the state.

“Prior to the tragedy in Parkland the number of Baker Acts was already skyrocketing and based on the complaints we receive on our hotline about 60% of the people being taken into custody and sent for an involuntary psychiatric examination never met the criteria for a Baker Act in the

first place,” reported Diane Stein, President of the CCHR Florida chapter.

The Baker Act law lays out three criteria for the involuntary examination of a person and all three criteria must be met, yet CCHR has found that the majority of citizens and even those authorized to initiate a Baker Act don't know or understand these criteria.

In response, CCHR Florida regularly hosts a seminar on Baker Act Rights delivered by attorney at law Carmen Miller who as a former assistant public defender has personal experience in representing Baker Act clients in civil and criminal hearings. During the seminar, Ms. Miller provides those in attendance with information on the Baker Act and on their rights under this law while answering questions on how a person can protect themselves from the abusive use of

the mental health law. [2]

“Over the past few years we have participated in or hosted hundreds of events for the sole purpose of educating people on their rights and exposing abusive psychiatric practices such as the prescribing of dangerous drugs that have known side effects such as suicide, aggression and homicidal ideation,” said Stein. “Thomas Jefferson said that ‘an educated citizenry is a vital requisite for our survival as a free people’ and I believe it is CCHR’s duty to help make sure every Floridian understands their rights.” [3]

For more information on the next [Baker Act Rights seminar](#) please call 727-442-8820 or visit the center at 109 N. Fort Harrison Avenue, Clearwater, Florida.

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

Sources:

[1] Local Officials, Organizations are Seeing an Increase in Baker Act use in SWFL
http://www.helloswfl.com/other_stories/local-officials-organizations-are-seeing-an-increase-in-baker-act-use-in-swfl/

[2] Voices for Humanity: A Stand for Rights in the Sunshine State
<https://www.scientology.tv/series/voices-for-humanity/diane-stein.html>

[3] Psychiatric Drugs: Create Violence and Suicide <https://www.cchrnt.org/pdfs/violence-report.pdf>

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The headquarters for CCHR Florida are located in downtown Clearwater



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