

Proposed “Foster Children Bill of Rights” Could Help Protect Children from Abuse

Having a Foster Children Bill of Rights in Florida would help youth avoid abuse if passed by the legislature.

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Foster homes are necessary for children who have lost their parents or whose circumstances necessitate they be removed from destructive home environments. However, there is a flaw in the system that can be harmful to kids. The Florida chapter of the [Citizens Commission on Human Rights](#) (CCHR) is raising awareness on this situation in order to help better protect this vulnerable group from abuse.



According to the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Center, every year, tens of thousands of foster youths suffer damage to their health because of being unnecessarily prescribed multiple psychotropic medications.

“Certainly, there are well-meaning people in the system but guidelines and ‘protocols’ need to be established to ensure the safety and long-term mental health of [foster children](#). This need is evident when psychiatric evaluations lead to children being labeled with one ‘mental disorder’ or another and prescribed a myriad of psychotropic drugs,” states Diane Stein, the president of CCHR Florida.

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In 2022 a bill nicknamed the “Foster Children Bill of Rights” was introduced in both Florida House and Senate but didn’t fully make it through the legislative session despite bi-partisan support. Many organizations, including CCHR, hope to see it reintroduced and passed into law in the coming legislative session.

According to the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Center, every year, tens of thousands of foster youths suffer damage to their health because of

being unnecessarily prescribed multiple psychotropic medications. One in four children between the ages of 6 and 17 are administered at least one psychotropic drug and a significant number of children are given a combination of two, three or four. Additionally, the monitoring of these children is infrequent and often fails to follow professional guidelines as well as the fact that it is often unclear who is authorized to consent. [1]

Mrs. Stein goes on to state that “children need to be protected from the [polypharmacy](#) (multiple prescriptions) that is being foisted on them by a sometimes understaffed, or overstressed system that, in disregard of children’s welfare, will often try to take the easy way out.”

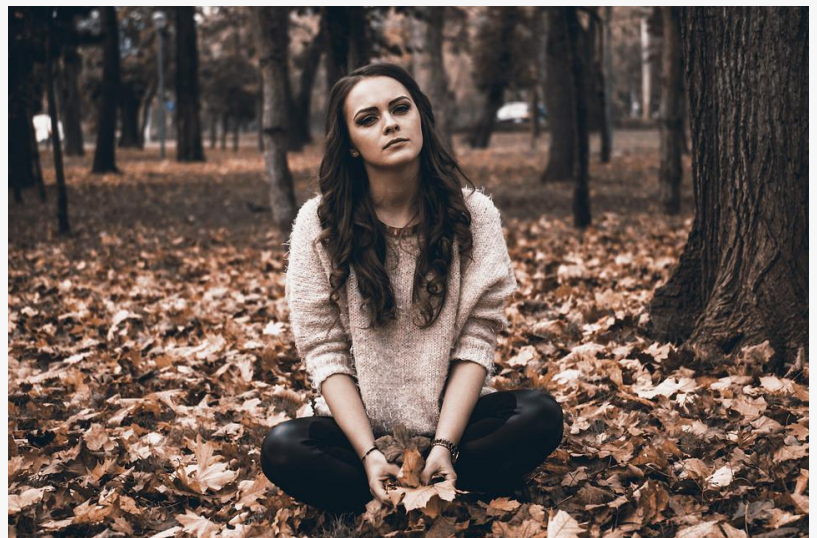
The Foster Children’s Bill of Rights, formally known as the Children and Young Adults in Out-of-Home Care would implement a basic framework of rights to include 1-3 below.

1. The right to be provided with healthy food. Eating healthy food is generally accepted as bedrock of a healthy body. However, diet is not always associated with mental health. Yet, according to residential treatment center Black Bear Lodge, there is a strong relationship between physical and mental health conditions. Often people with chronic physical illnesses are twice as likely to suffer from anxiety or depression as their physically healthy counterparts — for some health conditions, the rate can be even higher.[2]

2. The foster care system will be free of the administration of psychotropic medication or



The headquarters for CCHR Florida are located in downtown Clearwater.



chemical substances unless the administration of such medication or substances is authorized by a parent or the court.

3. The foster child be allowed to contact the children's ombudsman regarding violations of rights; to speak to the ombudsman confidentially; and to be free from threats or punishment for making complaints.

"This last," says Stein, "is a check and balance on the system, which has seen too many children not know where to turn. It is imperative, that this bill be passed to protect the futures of these children."

What can the average person do to help? They can write to their State Senators and Representatives. CCHR encourages community members to be a voice of advocacy for a child who has most likely lost much and is adrift in a system that finds it expeditious to label and medicate him or her, when instead it should be providing solace and understanding of their circumstances.

To find out more about how you can support children in the foster care system, contact CCHR at (800) 782-2878 or visit the Center located at 109 Fort Harrison Ave. in Clearwater.

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.

SOURCES:

[1] <https://www.pcori.org/research-results/2019/ensuring-foster-youth-are-only-prescribed-psychotropic-medication-when-their-best-interest#:~:text=Every%20year%2C%20tens%20of%20thousands,at%20least%20one%20psychotropic%20drug>

[2] <https://blackbearrehab.com/mental-health/how-does-chronic-illness-affect-mental-health/>



223,000 U.S. toddlers are currently being drugged with a variety of psychiatric drugs including ADHD drugs, antipsychotics, anti-anxiety drugs and antidepressants, along with 274,000 0-1 year olds.

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