

CCHR Encourages Support for Paris Hilton & Congressional Child Abuse Reforms

Mental health industry watchdog has seen 32 years of promised reforms to protect children from psychiatric abuse but restraint & sexual abuse of them continues

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Media across the nation reported celebrity Paris Hilton's meeting with White House administration officials on May 10, as part of her continued advocacy against and call for oversight of abuse in the troubled teen behavioral industry. She was joined by abuse survivors and national advocates working to educate lawmakers "about how badly children placed in the troubled teen industry are treated," she said.[1] The [Citizens Commission on Human Rights International](#), a 53-year mental health industry watchdog, applauded Ms. Hilton and her affiliated groups for speaking out about this grossly neglected area and spearheading a campaign for effective reform.



The mental health industry watchdog has seen 32 years of promised govt. reforms to protect children from behavioral and psychiatric abuse, but restraint and sexual abuse of them continues in residential behavioral facilities.

CCHR also supports their call for a Federal Bill of Rights for Youths, and wants to see this for every state. CCHR has been exposing child abuse, including restraint deaths, in for-profit behavioral-psychiatric residential facilities since 1990, when chains of facilities closed in the wake of government investigations and fines paid over abuse and fraud found.

"The multibillion-dollar troubled teen industry has been able to mislead parents, school districts, child welfare agencies and juvenile justice systems for decades," said Hilton. "The reason is a systemwide lack of transparency and accountability." [2]

CCHR agrees and says a national bill of rights for youths sought under a proposed Stop Institutional Child Abuse Act is vital. Since 1990, there have been numerous investigations into

the assault of children in residential behavioral and psychiatric facilities. CCHR was instrumental in investigating and exposing the now defunct Charter Behavioral Health that owned the facility, Provo Canyon center that Ms. Hilton said she was abused at in 1999. Charter sold the facility and others to another for-profit behavioral care company in 2000, where abuses have continued since.

Charter also owned a Texas psychiatric facility where in 1997, 16-year-old Roshelle Clayborne pleaded for her life during a restraint. "I can't breathe," the African American girl gasped, before she died. Texas state regulators recommended the facility be closed but instead placed it on a one-year probation and the center remains open under different ownership.[3]

A ground-breaking 1998 Hartford Courant and a Sixty Minutes II documentary in March of 1999 exposing conditions in psychiatric facilities prompted a Congressional investigation that confirmed the risks inherent in the use of restraints.[4] Amended regulations in 2000 were intended to prevent restraint deaths.

But restraint deaths have continued, including another 16-year-old African American youth, Cornelius Frederick, who in 2020, gasped, "I can't breathe," while several staff at the now closed Lakeside Behavioral Academy in Kalamazoo, Michigan restrained him. He died two days later.[5]

Since 1999, there have been at least four General Accounting Office (GAO) investigations/reports on restraint use or related issues (1999, 2008, 2009, 2022) involving mental health services/youth centers. Congressional investigations have also occurred.

In 2008, Mother Jones found that "Despite thousands of reports of abuse in such programs—including torturous tactics like food deprivation, sleep deprivation, vicious and extended emotional attacks, sexual humiliation and punitive use of isolation and restraint—the programs have remained unregulated and have suffered few legal consequences." [6]

Ms. Hilton's campaign to raise awareness about abuses and the rights of youths has already prompted state legislative efforts to curb restraint abuse. She said: "I want these places shut down. I want them to be held accountable." [7]

Oregon state Senator Gelsler Blouin, who sponsored legislation to increase oversight of residential treatment centers in her state, keenly noted: "The survivors have been telling us what's wrong for a long time.... As legislators we just hold up the megaphone, but we need to do what these kids have been telling us all along. It's that simple." [8]

CCHR said that it is astonishing how widespread the abuse is, given that spending on treatment of "behavioral" conditions was \$171 billion in 2009 and increased 65% to an estimated \$280.5 billion in 2020. [9]

For what result? Fraud and abuse, including restraint deaths, says CCHR.

Ricky Watson Jr., head of the National Juvenile Justice Network, says: "Tax dollars are being used ultimately to abuse and mistreat children." [10]

Given 30 years of promises of reforms and regulation changes, with significant abuses still occurring, much greater penalties for violating youth rights, including criminal and financial fines and hospital closures are needed. Oversight of the behavioral-psychiatric youth residential treatment industry needs to be dramatically increased. Individual facilities, their owners and mental health care staff and treating psychiatrists/doctors authorizing or involved in restraints, should be held accountable. Children and youths need a safe and nurturing environment, not one based on punitive, coercive and damaging treatment and practices. [Report abuse to CCHR](#).

[Read the full article here.](#)

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[2] Tyler Kingkade, Kate Snow and Erin Einhorn, "Paris Hilton pushes for bill to crack down on abusive youth facilities," NBC News, 20 Oct. 2021, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/paris-hilton-bill-troubled-teen-facilities-rcna3349>

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[5] "Lawsuit filed against company that owned Lakeside Academy," WoodTV.com, 7 Oct. 2021, <https://www.woodtv.com/news/kalamazoo-county/lawsuit-filed-against-company-that-owned-lakeside-academy/>; Tyler Kincade, "Video shows fatal restraint of Cornelius Frederick, 16, in Michigan foster facility," NBC News, 7 July 2020, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/video-shows-fatal-restraint-cornelius-fredericks-16-michigan-foster-facility-n1233122/>

[6] <https://www.cchrnt.org/2021/02/17/utah-state-law-curbing-behavioral-restraint-use-on-children-youths-is-applauded-but-unconditional-ban-is-needed-nationwide/>, citing: Maia Szalavitz, "Under the Radar: The Child Abuse Bill Swap," Mother Jones, 19 June 2008, <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2008/06/under-radar-child-abuse-bill-swap/>

[7] Aili Nahas, "Paris Hilton Opens Up About the Secret Terrifying Abuse She Suffered as a Teen," People, 22 Aug. 2020, <https://people.com/tv/paris-hilton-opens-up-about-the-secret-terrifying-abuse-she-suffered-as-teen/>

[8] Katie McKeller, "Paris Hilton returns to Utah for ceremonial bill signing to regulate troubled-teen centers," Deseret News, 6 Apr. 2021, <https://www.deseret.com/utah/2021/4/6/22370211/paris-hilton-returns-to-utah-for-ceremonial-bill-signing-to-regulate-troubled-teen-centers-gov-cox>

[9] "Increasing Access to Behavioral Health Care Advances Value for Patients, Providers and Communities," Trendwatch, American Hospitals Association, May 2019, p. 4

[10] https://www.cchrint.org/2020/12/22/more-media-urged-to-expose-youth-behavioral-houses-of-horror-death-traps/#_edn12, citing: Hannah Rappleye, Tyler Kingkade and Kate Snow, "A profitable 'death trap'" NBC News, 16 Dec. 2020, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/profitable-death-trap-sequel-youth-facilities-raked-millions-while-accused-n1251319>

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