



Georgia General Assembly



From the legislative desk of Senator Nancy Schaefer 50th District of Georgia

The Mental Health Screening of Children

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Hannity's America with Doug Kennedy on Antidepressants

[\(click here to watch video\)](#)

Written by Senator Nancy Schaefer, 50th District of Georgia

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For several years I have been gathering and accumulating information on the Mental Health Screening of Children. In the 2005 General Assembly, I introduced a resolution, SR 128, on the issue and in 2006 I introduced SB 430. When SB 430 was brought up in Committee, it was clear a study committee during the summer was needed so more voices could be heard and more research perfected.

The Study Committee was held at the Georgia State Capitol with many in attendance who have concerns about children nationwide in public schools being given a mental health screening without parental consent.

On August 28th, the Citizens Commission on Human Rights held an exhibit in Atlanta that featured, in part, a section on psychiatry and the medicating of children. I attended. The research was excellent and it was a very good alternative perspective to add to my other research on the issue of turning healthy children into patients for money. In other words, many normal behaviors in children are diagnosed as mental health diseases of the brain only to be treated with deadly drugs and potent pills that debilitate the victim or drive them to violence or suicide. According to Karen Effrem, M.D., a Minnesota pediatrician and a Director of EdWatch (www.edwatch.org), "several high school shooters like Eric Harris of Columbine, Kip Kinkel, and Jason Hoffman were on antidepressants or stimulants or both at the time of their crimes."

Children in America are being over-medicated. They are subjected to mental health screenings, they are introduced into psychiatric treatment, and they are prescribed dangerous psychotropic drugs. Millions of children, 10 million to be exact, that's 1 in 5, are diagnosed with alleged mental disorders such as ridiculous charges like being distracted, or talking out of turn, or not following directions, and therefore, they are drugged on substances equal to heroin and cocaine at a time when their brain is developing. (Psychotropic drugs means a prescription medication that is used for the treatment of mental disorders.)

A Federal program, The New Freedom Commission on Mental Health (NFCMH), created in 2002, was charged with exploring how to "improve America's mental health service delivery system." The Commission released its findings and recommended "universal" (meaning mandatory) mental health screening for all children ages 0-18,

and that the nation's schools should be used to address the mental health of every child. The idea was to subject all children, even pre-school children, to a mental health screening without input from the public or parental consent. And who was in line to benefit financially from this proposal? The big pharmaceutical companies and the psychiatric experts.

Illinois was the first State to pass the new universal Illinois Children's Mental Health Act, (ICMHA) creating a \$10 million children's mental health partnership. Other states have followed this invasion of family life and some states have not passed legislation but have schools already giving mental health screenings to children without parental consent. Does this not put profits for the psychiatric associations and potential increased sales of drugs first before the rights of parents and the well being of children? While I pray this legislation never passes in Georgia, mental health screenings, which often times results in false labeling, have already taken place in several schools in our state.

Illinois legislation called for a social and emotional development exam to be administered to all children and to pregnant women. It called for a statewide tracking system on each child (which would follow the child through life), and report cards on each child's development. A negative mental health diagnosis would prevent a child from ever serving in the military, from Federal government positions like the CIA, or the FBI, or with a police force.

Mental health screenings will increase unnecessary treatment costs for public programs that are already overburdened like Medicaid, which has thousands of mental patients and children in government programs. Some children are given up to sixteen drugs starting as young as three. According to my research, most of the drugs are not approved for children. They are dangerous and should be receiving the very strict **Black Box warning** soon in Congress.

Families and children are under dangerous assault today. Parents are encouraged to put their children on psychotropic drugs. This puts children at risk and medicates them into submission. My research tells me that radical psychiatrists have always targeted the education of children as the means to destroy morality, faith, and freewill. Also, if parents refuse to allow their children to be given a mental health screening, say with Teen Screen, will the parents be charged with child abuse?

I reaffirm my position in defense of Georgia's children and in support of the parent's right to decide what is best for their children. I am against the over prescribing of mind altering drugs to children such as Ritalin, Zoloft, and Prozac, and especially without parental consent. This is a human rights issue, and as an eight year Trustee of the National Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, (SBC), I represented the SBC as a lobbyist at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China: the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements in Istanbul, Turkey: at the United Nations Conference on Food and Water in Rome, Italy: and several follow up conferences in New York, fighting for the human rights dignity of every man, woman, and child.

I have no official connections with certain national groups as suggested in several articles. Where I may agree with them on parental rights and the abuse of over medicating of our children, my philosophy and beliefs do not match theirs. I believe that all men, women, and children are created equal, certainly, but I also believe they are endowed by their Creator.

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