

ADVOCACY

People First of Toledo Monthly Newsletter



STOP

Stop The Shock

By Quinn Thomas

Electroshock is legal in the United States. Most commonly it is used as a mental health treatment in the form of ECT-- electroconvulsive therapy. But there is another use as well. The Judge Rotenberg Center uses something called a GED (Graduated Electronic Decelerator) to administer shocks as an aversive.

The United Nations Rapporteur on Torture has condemned the device for being in violation of the U.N. Convention Against Torture.

The FDA banned using the device like this in March 2020, but the ban was overruled in July 2021. The JRC had filed lawsuits, and the courts decided that the FDA did not have the

UPCOMING EVENTS

ADULT AUTISM GAME GROUP

Every Friday at 7:30 in the Toledo Game Room. The 13th will be board games, the 20th will be tabletop roleplaying.

SUPER SATURDAY DANCE

January 14 from 7:00-9:00, Five Lakes Church gymnasium. For DD individuals and caregivers.

VALENTINES PARTY

February 10, 6:00-8:00, at the Ability Center. In joint with SALUTE and with a performance by iDance.

NIGHT TO SHINE

February 10 from 5:30-10:00 at the Family Christian Center in Defiance.

authority to ban a device for a specific purpose. They were only able to ban a device as a whole.

The JRC argues that the devices are necessary, and only used when students are an imminent threat to themselves or others. They say that people would die without these devices. But according to ASAN, the list of things they have *actually* shocked people for includes:

- Flapping their hands
- Rocking
- Moaning in pain due to a broken tooth
- Screaming after being shocked
- Tearing up a styrofoam cup
- Not taking off a jacket
- Standing up
- Losing focus for more than 10 seconds
- Swearing

All of these reasons are bad, but in the end, do the reasons matter? This shouldn't be happening for any reason.

Many self-advocates and advocacy organizations are rallying against this. The Autistic Self-Advocacy Network has been leading the charge, with assistance from the Arc, Autistics United Canada, Disability Rights International, and many small groups in Massachusetts, where the school is located. An article from British newspaper the Guardian did a lot to raise international awareness.

This issue is relevant now because of the end-of-year omnibus bill Congress just passed. After years and years of fighting from self-advocates, the bill finally included a clause that gave the FDA the power to ban GEDs and make it stick this time. It just became legally possible to end this practice. Now is the time to act. Consider signing a petition, calling your congressperson, or writing a letter to the editor.



**People First
of
Toledo**

OUR NEXT MEETING

Our first meeting for 2023 will be January 19th, from 6:00-7:30 pm at the Ability Center in the Openlander Room. State Senator-elect Josh Williams will discuss his experiences as a disabled politician and how he came to be one.