

POSITION PAPER

THE DRUGGING OF AMERICA'S CHILDREN

By: John W. Wallace

The number of American children under 19 years of age who are prescribed psychotropic drugs in this country is staggering. Approximately 6 million children, including 10% of all 6-18 year old boys in the United States are on psychotropic drugs including Ritalin despite the fact that there is no scientific evidence that a chemical imbalance in the brain is the cause of ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). There is no biological test for ADHD; the diagnosis is based only on observation of behavioral symptoms. To this day, there is no independent, scientifically accepted valid test for ADHD.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a relatively new disorder. It was created by a vote at a meeting of the American Psychiatric Association in 1987. The symptoms of ADHD include a child not paying attention to detail, making careless mistakes, not listening when spoken to, forgetfulness, fidgeting and running, climbing or talking excessively. This sure sounds like most boys and girls in their growing years. In fact, three out of four youths diagnosed with ADHD are boys. Of course a small percentage of children do suffer from legitimate mental illnesses, but the widespread use of Ritalin and other drugs on youngsters who simply exhibit typical youthful energetic, fidgety, and impatient behavior is almost criminal. The Food and Drug Administration has stated that these psychotropic drugs cause suicidal behavior, mania, psychosis, hallucinations and hostility which has been shown in the Virginia Tech shooting, Columbine High School shooting and seven other shootings, where these psychiatric drugs were the common denominator.

Two federal government programs may also be contributing to the skyrocketing diagnoses of ADHD in school children. These diagnoses have been accompanied by surging sales of Ritalin, a stimulant used to treat ADHD. The drug produces effects similar to cocaine and amphetamines. The Supplemental Security Income Program hands out cash to low-income parents whose children are diagnosed as having ADHD, which the government accepts as a learning disability. Special-Education grant money is also awarded to schools each year by the Department of Education for every child diagnosed with ADHD. The government began funding schools and families for ADHD children in the early 1990s. Since then Ritalin sales have nearly tripled.

To make matters worse, the US government has begun to implement a mental health screening policy for America's 52 million school children and 6 million school employees under the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health. One obvious beneficiary of the proposal is the pharmaceutical industry, which will sell the psychotropic drugs that undoubtedly will be prescribed to millions of additional American schoolchildren under the new screening program.

This very intrusive government program is sure to provide a wider market for high-priced antidepressants and antipsychotic medication. The possibility exists that this new government supported mandatory mental health screening program is the end result of sophisticated marketing, the funding of selected ADHD advocacy groups and political contributions on the part of the pharmaceutical industry. Especially when one considers that pharmaceutical companies underwrite 30% of the American Psychiatric Association budget and spend multi-millions of dollars on sophisticated advertising and public relations campaigns to promote these drugs. According to the Washington watchdog group, the Center for Responsive Politics, between 1998 and 2006, the pharmaceutical industry also spent over \$1 billion supporting political candidates and political action committees, more than any other U.S. industry. In the 2007 elections, the Pharmaceutical industry contributed \$17.8 million to political candidates and political action committees.

Parents, children, and their private doctors should decide whether a child has mental health problems, not government bureaucrats. Parents must do everything possible to retain responsibility and control over their children's well-being. There seems to be no end to the government's desire to rule every aspect of our lives, including how we raise our children. Forced mental health screening is just the latest of many state usurpations of parental authority through politically-correct school curricula, mandatory vaccines, interference with family discipline, etc. All represent assaults on families and parental rights.

For these reasons, I support legislation that keeps federal funds from paying for universal or mandatory mental health screening of children and it protects the parental rights of parents so that they can raise their own children and make decisions about what is best for their children.

For more information about John W. Wallace, or to find out about his positions on other issues, please go to: www.TeaPartyRep.com