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[Dr. Peter Breggin](#)

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A Hero Protects America's Children from Psychiatric Abuse

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Alaska attorney Jim Gottstein has taken the bull by the horns. It's a bull of many terrifying shapes and forms. First and foremost, it is the raging bull of the Psychopharmaceutical Complex that is goring America's children. It's also the rampaging state government bull that everywhere runs roughshod over the children in its custody and care. And then it's the "bull" handed out by drug companies and organized psychiatry to justify using drugs to suppress the behavior of children.

Jim Gottstein's Law Project for Psychiatric Rights ([PsychRights.org](#)) has gone to court to stop the drugging of Alaska's children. Before they are given psychiatric drugs, Jim wants the following standards to be met:

- (1) That proven psychosocial interventions have been exhausted.
- (2) That the benefits of the drug outweigh the risks.
- (3) That those authorizing the prescriptions are fully informed about the risks and benefits, and the alternatives.
- (4) That the children are thoroughly monitored, including for side effects.

There is nothing radical or in your face about Jim's attempt to require the state of Alaska to use science and common sense before drugging the children in its care, usually for the mere convenience of their keepers. A sane society would bar the state from giving psychiatric drugs to any children under any circumstances. Their brains are growing--and should not be made to develop in a toxic internal environment. Instead of psychiatric drugs, they need what all children need--more and better attention from caring adults, improved family life, and better schooling. And they need protection from people who would give them drugs!

About fifteen years ago I spent more than a week as a consultant in Alaska working with a marvelous wrap-around program for children and youth. Alaska had been farming out its more difficult children to the lower 48, as far away as Texas. Not only was that bad for the children and their families, it was outrageously expensive. So Alaska developed a program that aimed at the community wrapping its arms around the child and the child's family, spending money to provide what the family needed to raise its children decently--everything from job training and parent training for the mothers and fathers to counseling and tutoring for the children. Called the Alaska Youth Initiative (AYI), it worked incredibly well and while costly it was a lot cheaper than institutionalizing these very distressed and distressing children in Alaska or elsewhere.

What happened to Alaska's wrap-around program? It went the way of all good "mental health" programs--out of existence. Why? Because the Psychopharmaceutical Complex provides a seemingly much quicker and easier fix by suppressing the brains of our children. At every opportunity, organized psychiatry rejects effective psychosocial and educational programs in favor of psychiatric drugs and institutionalization. This is because psychiatrists have no competence and no monopoly over psychosocial and educational programs. Their power and authority rests on the presumed necessity of diagnosing and medicating children.

Attorney Gottstein points out that the state takes custody over children who have already been abused and suffered at the hands of adults, and then "saddles them with a mental illness diagnosis and drugs them. The extent of this State inflicted child abuse is an emergency and should be corrected immediately." The children, of course, are involuntary patients. They need special protections from the state, not the destruction of their mental faculties and brains with toxic agents.

Alaska is not an especially egregious offender. The state-run drugging of children is endemic throughout the fifty states. Everywhere, most children in state custody, including institutions and foster homes, are given psychiatric diagnoses and drugs.

Psychiatric diagnoses do not address the real problems of the children, such as "abandoned or abused by parents," "victim of sexual and physical abuse," "mishandled by state officials" or "ground down by poverty and racism." Instead, diagnoses such as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, and Bipolar Disorder carry the untrue implication that the problem lies within the child and even within a defect inside the child's brain. This is a tragic betrayal of young children whose problems always have their real origin within the family or lack thereof in their lives, and with other adults and institutions that have failed or abused them.

I have written extensively about the destructive effects of psychiatric drugs on children, including brain cell death, shrinkage of brain tissue, suppression of physical growth, and cognitive and emotional impairments. My most detailed account can be found in my medical textbook, *Brain-Disabling Treatments in Psychiatry: Drugs, Electroshock and the Psychopharmaceutical Complex, 2nd Edition* (2008). You can find many more books and articles about children on my website, [www.breggin.com](#). You can find additional information on Jim's website, [psychrights.org](#).

Jim is a heroic warrior on behalf of some of America's most vulnerable citizens. In 2006 he took the enormously risky road of making public internal Eli Lilly

documents, indicating among other things, that the drug company was pushing its deadly "antipsychotic" drug Zyprexa (olanzapine) for unapproved uses. These documents led to federal criminal charges against Lilly and to settlements with the government exceeding \$1 billion in which Lilly plead guilty to promoting unapproved uses. Lilly has paid yet another \$1 billion plus in settlements in civil lawsuits over its alleged cover up of Zyprexa causing fatal cases of diabetes and pancreatitis--lawsuits that this writer participated in as a medical expert against Lilly. Eli Lilly is so rich and powerful it can spend billions of dollars to bail itself out of its own malfeasance and still go on making a profit.

Meanwhile, Zyprexa remains one of several so-called antipsychotics drugs that are too often given without rational, ethical or scientific justification to subdue children throughout the United States. Just this week I received a phone call from parents struggling with the tragedy of Zyprexa-induced tardive dyskinesia that has been inflicting agonizing and disabling muscle spasms on their son. Most cases of tardive dyskinesia are irreversible.

People were understandably horror-struck when they saw seal puppies being clubbed to death in the wintry north of our continent. Now consider what's happening to human pups in Alaska--and to our children throughout America--when psychiatric drugs crush their brains. Quieter and more subtle than beating baby seals to death, but deadly nonetheless.

Want to do a good deed? Jim Gottstein's nonprofit Law Project for Psychiatric Rights can use your support. Jim has huge, wealthy enemies; and poor and vulnerable constituents. He takes no salary for his reform work. Get in touch with Jim. Lend his projects some help. America's children will be grateful.

Peter R. Breggin, M.D. is a psychiatrist in Ithaca, New York. His latest book is *Medication Madness: A Psychiatrist Exposes the Dangers of Psychiatric Medication* (2008). His website is www.breggin.com.

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