



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jabari Brisport

Bill to End Electro-shock Announced

JABARI BRISPORT May 4, 2022

| ISSUE: **CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES, DISABILITY**



ALBANY, NY - On Wednesday, May 4th, Sen. Jabari Brisport & Am. Harvey Epstein stood with child & disability rights advocates to announce new legislation targeting facilities that practice electro-shock treatments on disabled children.

The bill, “Andre’s Law,” is named in honor of Andre McCollins, a survivor of electro-shock and other forms of aversive conditioning (the practice of repeatedly and intentionally inducing pain or discomfort in an attempt to alter a person’s behavior.) Andre was sent to an out-of-state, DOE-approved facility where he was subjected to aversive conditioning and ultimately

hospitalized after being tied to a board and electro-shocked thirty-one times over seven hours. New York State continues to send children to this same facility, [the Judge Rotenberg Center](#).

In 2005, New York prohibited aversive conditioning within the borders of New York. However, a loophole in the law has resulted in New York spending more than \$100 million over the past decade sending disabled children to out-of-state facilities that use electro-shock and other forms of aversive conditioning.

The new bill would end this practice and would be a multi-million dollar threat to the controversial Judge Rotenberg Center in particular, which spent [over \\$100,000](#) on political lobbying last year alone. The bill comes in the wake of a controversial ruling by the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit that prevented the FDA from banning the use of electro-shock as aversive conditioning.

“No facility that thinks it’s acceptable to electro-shock children can be trusted with their care. Our nation has found excuses for far too long to lock away disabled children and subject them to inhumane practices. The legacy of Willowbrook and of forced lobotomies lives on in electro-shock and New York must stop funding facilities that engage in its use.” **said Senator Brisport, chair of the Senate’s Children and Families Committee**

“Medical professionals, federal agencies, international human rights groups, and dozens of states oppose the use of electro-shock procedures, which cause physical harm and trauma to its victims. While New York has outlawed the use of electro-shock “treatment” a major loophole exists wherein people with disabilities are sent by New York state agencies to the last remaining institution in the country that uses these cruel and harmful procedures. I am proud to be standing with Senator Brisport and a strong coalition to end the victimization and harm to New Yorkers with disabilities,” **said Assemblymember Harvey Epstein.**

Cheryl McCollins, mother of Andre McCollins, spoke at the press conference and said “the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.”

QUOTES FROM KEY DISABILITY ADVOCATES ON THE BILL:

In a statement of support, the Autistic Self Advocacy Network wrote: “For decades, disabled advocates have fought to end torture at the Judge Rotenberg Center. The Andre McCollins Bill, which will stop New Yorkers from being sent to the JRC, is a critical step towards closing this dangerous and abusive institution for good. The Autistic Self Advocacy Network is proud to support this important legislation.”

“To all the residents of JRC I say, I see you. Your community of disabled people sees you. You matter. Your lives mean more than what you have been led to believe when you are tortured and shocked, and treated as less than human. You are a person worthy of all the best that life has to offer, and you have a community that will continue to fight for your freedom from the torture you are currently forced to endure,” **said Sharon daVanport, Executive Director of Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network (AWN)**

"For too long, our government and other public and private institutions have subjugated disabled people, not respecting our humanity or our bodily autonomy," **said Tony Alexander, Director of Policy & Advocacy for the Autistic People of Color Fund.** "Institutions that use abusive behavior modification techniques—to punish disabled people for their mannerisms or in response to disabled people's mental health crises—have no place in our society. It's not lost on us that these harmful techniques are often used disproportionately on Black and Brown disabled people in particular, making the link between disability justice and racial justice all the more evident. We commend Senator Brisport and all of those who have worked tirelessly within the New York State Assembly and Senate on disability justice issues.”

"Years ago, New York State banned the use of electroshock on animals. Yet today, children and young adults with disabilities are subjected to what the UN defines as torture and procedures which the FDA has banned. We applaud Senator Bridgeport, Assembly Member Epstein, the co-sponsors and all the advocates assembled here, many of whom have fought this battle for years. We hold dear our memory and respect for the late Harriet Hines for her fierce advocacy for these bills," **said Mike Schweinsburg, president of the 504 Democratic Club.**

"We appeal to all legislators to pass these bills swiftly so young people with disabilities are no longer victims of this abuse," he concluded

"The National Action Network is against conversion therapy. The NAN Disabilities Committee and the other units of the organization continuously work to end all forms of sanctuary abuse and advocate for civil rights for every single human being. Children and populations living with disabilities are exceptionally included in our activism for health equity," **said Chaplain Naomi Jones, NAN Disabilities Committee Chairwoman & National Crisis Steering Committee Liaison**

This bill was brought to the office of Sen. Bridgeport by Chaplain Harriet Hines, who tragically passed away two weeks ago. In a letter for Justice to the Governor, she wrote:

"The safety of the special-needs population is in your hands. All it takes is the stroke of your pen to sign an executive order for the return of our New York State children. It is the hope of all of the kids and children with special needs that you take this issue front and center. Many years has lapsed with the torture that still continues."

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RELATED LEGISLATION

2021-S8935

- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
-

Prohibits the use of aversive conditioning and other certain punishments

April 29, 2022

In Senate Committee [Rules](#)

Sponsored by [Jabari Brisport](#)

Do you support this bill?