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News Flash:
Ban Torture, Close the Rotenberg Center

April 24, 2012

MetroWest

Center for Independent Living, Inc.



Greetings!

On Monday, April 23, closing arguments were made in a civil trial brought by a student's parent against the Judge Rotenberg Center. (Read about the trial at the [Autism Self Advocacy Network](#)). Hopefully the video of the torture that the boy experienced, and other evidence, will convince the court to rule against the center. The staff was out of control, but the aversive electric shock therapy they were administering is legal and is integral to the [Judge Rotenberg Center's](#) treatment program. MWCIL, and most other disability organizations, want the Judge Rotenberg Center shut down, and the intentional use of pain as a form of treatment - including the use of electric shock, seclusion, and restraints on young children and adults with disabilities, legislated as illegal. The Rotenberg Center is believed to be the only "school" in the country which continues to administer electric shocks.

In 2007, the Center was in the news after an expose from [Mother Jones](#) was widely reported. [Boston Magazine](#) published more sordid details in 2008. In 2011, "The Massachusetts Department of Developmental Services (DDS) adopted new regulations ...that greatly restrict the intentional use of pain as a form of treatment - including the use of electric shock, seclusion, and restraints on young children and adults with disabilities " after Governor Patrick signed an executive order directing MDDS to review their policies regarding electric shock and other severe aversives. The directive allows JRC to continue shocking their existing students, but they cannot start any new students on this treatment.

Why is the school allowed to administer painful electric shock as a therapy? At MWCIL, we would like Sen Brian Joyce (D-Milton) to refile a bill that was unanimously passed last year in the Senate to ban the use of such aversive "treatments" but which wasn't followed up by the House. MDDC regulations don't go far enough, and are subject to change. *A law permanently and completely banning this torture is the right thing to do.*

We also don't understand why a school that tortures its students with disabilities is allowed to stay open. The state needs to close the Judge Rotenberg Center.

Please contact your senator and representative, and ask them to ban the intentional use of pain as a form of treatment - including the use of electric shock, seclusion, and restraints on young children and adults with disabilities. in Massachusetts, and to close the Judge Rotenberg Center. Visit [wheredoivotema.com](#) to

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Nationally, this torturous treatment must be made illegal. [Disability Rights International](#) has strongly advocated against this practice. The [National Council on Disability](#), appointed by the Obama administration, has come out strongly against JRC with this [letter to the Department of Justice](#). We urge Congress to ban these treatments.

from Paul Spooner,
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