



DOC Use of Stun Guns on Visiting Children

In at least three separate correctional facilities across the state, Department of Corrections officers used 50,000 volt handheld stun guns on visiting children ages 8 through 14. The story was brought to the public by the *St. Petersburg Times*.

DOC has terminated one employee and placed ten more on administrative leave with pay while they investigate.

The Children's Campaign has released a press statement saying that advocates are sick and tired of hearing from higher-ups that the mistreatment and abuse occurring in Florida's institutions are always "isolated instances". The statement chronicles several cases over time and calls on our leaders and citizens to change the culture of the state.

Read the press statement and the *St. Petersburg Times* article below.

Children's Campaign Statement to the Media:

The Florida Department of Corrections purports that the use of stun guns by its officers is a practice highly regulated and policies forbid unauthorized use. But in three separate correctional facilities on the same day children received 50,000 volts of electric shock cursing through their young bodies as part of what appears to be "show and tell" exercises.

DOC spokeswoman Gretl Plessinger told the *St. Petersburg Times*, the news organization that brought the incident public, "There are very clear rules about when, where and who these devices are to be used on and all officers are clearly trained in this."

Children's Campaign, Inc. is alarmed and outraged that an untold number of children participating in "Take Your Sons and Daughters to Work Day" had their health or even their lives threatened in such a careless and reckless manner.

While it is unthinkable to believe that children participating in anything as innocuous as shadowing their parents at work would have stun guns used on them, there are many other instances of child abuse within Florida's criminal justice system. How many times must it occur before the state takes aggressive action to stamp it out? We are so sick and tired of hearing from the higher-ups that the mistreatment and abuse were "isolated instances".

It is time to change the culture of this state.

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***St. Petersburg Times'* Article "Two other Florida prisons zapped visiting kids with stun guns":**

Two more state prisons have acknowledged incidents in which guards zapped visiting children with handheld stun guns, bringing to three the number of facilities where the unapproved demonstration was used on "Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day."

On Friday, the Department of Corrections said that several kids visiting Franklin Correctional Institution

in the Panhandle on April 24 were shocked by a guard who was demonstrating what corrections officers do at work. On Tuesday, the department revealed that children visiting Indian River Correctional Institution in Vero Beach and Martin Correctional Institution in Indiantown were also zapped with 50,000-volt electronic immobilization devices.

The devices used on the children, who are between the ages of 8 and 14, require bodily contact. Used on unruly inmates, the devices usually knock victims to the ground, cause a few minutes of disorientation and leave two small burn marks.

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Children's Campaign, Inc. is a cutting-edge advocacy organization devoted to making children's issues a legislative priority while staying within the well-documented boundaries of permissible activities for a 501 (C)(3) organization. Our mission is to engage citizens to take action and hold our leaders accountable to deliver the 5 Promises to Florida's children.

For more information visit our website at www.iamforkids.org, or contact:

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