

## Human Rights Advocates Demand Lawmakers in Missouri Launch an Immediate Investigation of Missouri Department of Mental Health

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Dear Missouri lawmakers:

Please investigate and take action immediately to stop the dehumanizing treatment of patients at a facility operated by the state of Missouri, more specifically, the treatment of a patient named Dawn Dziuba.

Our organization, MindFreedom International, has launched a public campaign to expose the treatment of Dawn Dziuba who has been detained indefinitely at the forensic inpatient treatment psychiatric facility operated by the Missouri Department of Mental Health's (DMH) Division of Behavioral Health (DBH).

She was subjected to a limited guardianship and institutionalized there since 2014 in response to vague criminal charges for which she was never convicted, despite the fact that she is fully competent to make her own medical decisions and possesses a law degree, as well as two master's degrees from Washington University in St. Louis.

Please take the time to listen to Dawn, in her own words, describe her situation. As you can tell, she is anything but incompetent.

[Click HERE to listen to Dawn Dziuba](#)

More than ten years of institutionalizing Dawn Dziuba has cost Missouri taxpayers nearly \$1 million. At a time when mental health budgets are being strained to the breaking point, this is a staggering waste of public funds and the taxpayers deserve an apology and an explanation.

Equally concerning, is the fact that Dawn is facing retaliation, specifically for exercising her constitutionally guaranteed rights. Immediately after filing a complaint against a particularly abusive staff member, something which she is legally entitled to do, Dawn lost her phone privileges, visitors privileges, and she was restricted to the ward. She was cut off from what little contact with the

outside world she formerly enjoyed. Unable to visit the library, she is unable to print out and submit legal paperwork allowing her to have due process.

When we asked Dawn, "would you be willing to promise staff members that you will withdraw all complaints and cease to file complaints in return for your freedom or in return for your right to decline medication?" Dawn replied unequivocally, "NO". Dawn refuses to sign anything as a condition of her release and she refuses to withdraw complaints.

Furthermore, we were able to confirm that in addition to having her freedoms curtailed, such as the ability to make phone calls or visit the library, she is also being chemically restrained. Psychiatric drugging for punitive reasons contradicts everything we know about mental health treatment and recovery. The state of Missouri is drugging patients as a means of punishment and control, not because people pose any danger to themselves or others, and certainly not for therapeutic reasons. We demand that you investigate this practice immediately and call for it to be banned.

Dawn is being threatened with forced injection if she refuses to take, by mouth, everyday, 5 mg. Abilify, a second generation so-called 'antipsychotic' despite Dawn not suffering from psychosis. The drug Abilify, is a neuroleptic or major tranquilizer and is known to have a litany of side effects, including brain impairment which can sometimes be permanent. The forced drugging of this patient is in direct retaliation for Dawn exercising her constitutionally guaranteed rights.

If lawmakers in Missouri allow the continued practice of punishing people with forced or coerced drugging, allowing this to be called 'therapy', our society is not that different from the Soviet Union as described by political dissident Aleksandr Solzenitsyn in his book 'The Gulag Archipelago.' who wrote about his experience as a political dissident when it was a common practice in the Soviet Union to round up political dissidents, forcing them into psychiatric wards and subjecting them, by force, to powerful neuroleptic drugs.

MindFreedom International is a 501c3 organization located in Eugene, Oregon. We are the only mental health organization to have consultation status with the United Nations, which declared in its 'Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities' (CRPD) that all forms of forced psychiatric treatment are considered a form of torture.

Our organization is launching an international campaign on Dawn's behalf, and calling on our international allies to help us to expose the human rights violations that Dawn Dziuba is being subjected to in your state. We will be

contacting the media in St. Louis, as a part of our campaign and we hope we can count on you to do the right thing by supporting the rights of all residents of Missouri, including Dawn Dziuba.

If you have any questions, you can contact our office by calling 541-345-9106 between 9 am and 2 pm pacific or write to [office@mindfreedom.org](mailto:office@mindfreedom.org)

Regards,  
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