



**Center for the Human Rights of
Users and Survivors of Psychiatry**



Repeal Mental Health Laws

Documenting and challenging forced psychiatric treatment

The Opal Project

The Center for the Human Rights of Users and Survivors of Psychiatry, Voices of the Heart Inc., the Campaign to Repeal Mental Health Laws and The Opal Project vehemently object to the targeting of people labeled with mental illness for special restriction of the privilege of gun ownership, in Governor Cuomo's State of the State address. "Mental illness" has nothing to do with violence; in fact youth and male gender are the most salient characteristics if any profiling is to be done. By restricting our purchase of guns, Governor, you will contribute only to stereotyping, stigma and scapegoating throughout society – you will not reduce violence. By turning neighbor against neighbor, you are more likely to increase violence by breeding fear and isolation.

We have also learned that more repressive legislation is on its way as an amendment to the law on involuntary outpatient commitment (known by the euphemism "assisted outpatient treatment"). The vast majority of people subjected to outpatient commitment – intrusion on privacy, institutionalization without walls and forced drugging – have never been violent. They include people like Ellen Glick-Haley, who was despondent over loss of a relationship with her children and who died from an operation related to adverse effects of clozapine, which she was forced to take under her "AOT" order.

The disability movement has a saying, "Nothing about us without us." Take a listen to what people labeled with psychiatric disabilities – a wide spectrum of us as individuals and in our self-representative organizations – are saying about our experiences, lives and needs. Policy made about us without us is arrogant and offensive to democratic principles.

January 10, 2013