

## News

# Children Abused in Unregulated 'Boot Camps,' Critic Charges

**Congress sets hearing on 'tough love' camps**

*April 22, 2008*

"Your dog has more protection than your children," says Maia Szalavitz, a journalist who has investigated so-called "tough love" camps and residential programs supposedly aimed at helping troubled teens.

Congress will hold a second round of hearings Thursday on problems highlighted by Szalavitz and others. Rep. George Miller (D-CA), chair of the House Education and Labor Committee, is chairing the probe of widespread abuse in the programs.



[Congress May Regulate 'Tough Love' Boot Camps for Troubled Kids](#)

• [Children Abused in Unregulated 'Boot Camps,' Critic Charges](#)

---  
• [News for Parents](#)

There have been at least 10 deaths of children held in teen "wilderness programs," "boot camps," "emotional growth boarding schools," and other residential facilities. The first round of hearings last October prompted bipartisan outrage at industry abuses that committee members compared to "human right abuses in third world countries."

Several victims portrayed in Szalavitz' book, "Help at Any Cost," are scheduled to testify at the hearing. She has called the "tough love" programs "an industry out of control and answerable to no one."

"Most parents are unaware that in many states, dog kennels and nail salons are more highly regulated than the health and safety of

children in so called 'tough love teen boot camp' institutions. Anyone, including ex-convicts, can open a program. No qualification or certification is required," Szalavitz said.

Szalavitz is a fellow of the Statistical Assessment Service (STATS), a not-for-profit Washington, DC, group that highlights the use and abuse of science and statistics in the media.

#### **Report Your Experience**

If you've had a bad experience -- or a good one -- with a consumer product or service, we'd like to hear about it. All complaints are reviewed by class action attorneys and are considered for publication on our site. Knowledge is power! Help spread the word. [File your consumer report now.](#)

#### **Find this article at:**

[http://www.consumeraffairs.com/news04/2008/04/tough\\_love.html](http://www.consumeraffairs.com/news04/2008/04/tough_love.html)

☐

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

ConsumerAffairs, Inc.