

WE THE PEOPLE

OKLAHOMA



SHOCK STUN BELTS & ANKLE BRACES IN OKLAHOMA COURTROOMS

12-6-16, **Tulsa, OK:** Recently we have been made aware that stun devices, worn around the ankles, are being used against defendants in court. These stun devices discharge debilitating electrical shocks of 50,000 volts which can knock a person to the ground and cause uncontrollable shaking, defecation, urination, and in some cases severe medical trauma. Many states, including California and Indiana, have banned stun devices such as belts and anklets from use. In California Chief Justice Ronald George stated "In view of the nature of a stun belt and the debilitating and humiliating consequences that such a belt can inflict it is reasonable to believe that many if not most persons would experience an increase in anxiety if compelled to wear such a belt while testifying at trial." The California Supreme court also stated the belt was designed for "total psychological supremacy which may impair the defendant's ability to think clearly, concentrate on the testimony, communicate with counsel at trial and maintain a positive demeanor before the jury."

Amnesty International has called for the complete ban of this type of equipment stating: The U.S. is party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article Seven of which states that "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment." The Eighth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution specifies that "cruel and unusual punishments [shall not be] inflicted." According to the U.N.'s Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, "[i]nstruments of restraint, such as handcuffs, chains, irons and straightjackets shall never be applied as punishment. [Restraints may] never be used in a manner ... [as to] cause humiliation or degradation."

Unfortunately these stun devices have been discharged when judges became irritated with defendants even though the defendants were not displaying violent behavior. The

devices have also accidentally discharged in courtrooms causing injury. This shows how problematic these devices can be. Questions arise as to who determines the use of the device and the justification of deploying a shock to a defendant. How often are the devices used, how often are they deployed and how does this affect the testimony of a defendant if he or she feels at any moment a shock can be administered? Again these individuals are innocent until proven guilty. Therefore we are calling on the state to ban these devices in the courtroom.

“WE THE PEOPLE OKLAHOMA” will continue to push for transparency and accountability from our public officials. We will continue to work on behalf of the citizens of the great state of Oklahoma because when concerned citizens make their voices heard positive changes are made.

For more information or to contact We The People Oklahoma please visit our website at www.wethepeopleoklahoma.com or call 918-947-9080.

#