

I DESERVE TO BE HEARD

Sharisa Kochmeister

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Editor's note: On November 5 in Chicago, a joint press conference was held by TASH, ADAPT, and the National Parent Network on Disabilities, protesting the biased reporting in the PBS Frontline documentary "Prisoners of Silence." These are the comments Ms. Kochmeister made at that press conference, typing without physical support before an audience of several hundred people.

They denied me my freedom of speech- a basic civil right. They impugned my integrity and insulted my intelligence. They told evil lies in the guise of honest reportage. I deserve to be heard. If my name and image are used, why not my words? We need to fight bigotry with one loud unified voice. I have a voice now. They will not return me to prison. They would not do this to Helen Keller and survive unscathed. They will not do it to us either. It's our turn now.

THEY DENIED ME MY FREEDOM OF SPEECH - A BASIC CIVIL RIGHT. THEY IMPUGNED MY INTEGRITY AND INSULTED MY INTELLIGENCE. THEY TOLD EVIL LIES IN THE GUISE OF HONEST REPORTAGE. I DESERVE TO BE HEARD. IF MY NAME AND IMAGE ARE USED, WHY NOT MY WORDS? WE NEED TO FIGHT BIGOTRY WITH ONE LOUD UNIFIED VOICE. I HAVE A VOICE NOW. THEY WILL NOT RETURN ME TO PRISON. THEY WOULD NOT DO THIS TO HELEN KELLER AND SURVIVE UNSCATHED. THEY WILL NOT DO IT TO US EITHER. IT'S OUR TURN NOW.