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July 15, 2015

The Honorable Mary Beth Bonaventura
Director of the Department of Child Services
Indiana Government Center South – E306
302 West Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

RE: Mandated Caseload Standards and Implementation of Reform

Dear Director Bonaventura:

Thank you for agreeing to meet with Senator Breaux and me to provide an update on the Department of Child Services' progress toward meeting statutory caseload standards. Your willingness to engage the legislature and involve lawmakers in this process is vital in establishing a window into how we will right this situation and ensure the safety of our most vulnerable children.

With that in mind, Senator Breaux and I would like to explore the framework the Department has put in place to reduce Family Case Manager (FCM) caseloads and restructure the Department's institutional culture.

In recommendations made by Deloitte in its March 2015 report to the Department, the consultancy laid out 10 options to reduce caseloads with implementation timelines ranging from 0 to 12 months.

Which option(s) has/have the Department begun moving forward in meeting Deloitte's Implementation Roadmap?

Has the Department designated or hired staff to head up a Project Management Office (PMO)?

To implement the PMO, Deloitte acknowledged the Department would need to identify a centralized governance team; develop governance structures; establish communications, training and change management plans.

Where does the implementation of these steps stand? When does the Department expect them to be completed?

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Deloitte noted that options like: Pipeline and Performance Metric Methodology; Case Closure; Workforce Planning; and Improving Tool Usage could be implemented immediately.

Where does the implementation of these options stand? When does the Department expect them to be completed?

Of specific interest to Senator Breaux and me are steps being taken to address institutional challenges at the Department. Specifically, the need to address supervisor training as it relates to FCM retention. According to the report:

*Data analysis conducted as part of the study suggests that compliance with caseload standards is being impacted significantly by high attrition rates. In addition, approximately 44 percent of the state's FCMs have less than two years of tenure with DCS. Turnover and constant hiring can significantly disturb the agency's day-to-day cadence and contribute to inconsistencies in how work is conducted. **Supervision offers stabilization** [emphasis added].*

As you are well aware, the human element is at the center of this type of casework. FCMs step into the lives of neglected and abused children and in doing so shoulder an incredible burden. That's why we find Deloitte's reasoning that "focusing...[supervisor] training on specific coaching, mentoring and management strategies" compelling in that it will not only reduce turnover and caseloads, but improve the quality of casework, increase FCM morale and potentially save lives.

Both Senator Breaux and I have been approached by FCMs decrying the lack of support they receive and the intimidation they experience when expressing concern about high caseloads. Heavy caseloads, low pay and long hours also contribute to on-the-job stress, employee fatigue and burnout.

What feedback loops exist for FCMs to express on-the-job concerns without fear of reprisal?

What steps are being taken to mitigate employee burnout due to stress and "secondary trauma" experienced by caseworkers? Do FCMs have access to mental health support services?

What payment structure exists for FCMs working over their allotted hours?

Where does FCM compensation stand as compared to other states?

How is the Department working to address FCM attrition and supervisor training?

Deloitte estimated implementation of new supervisor protocol to take six to 12 months and pointed to potential barriers including conflict with the Department's 'peer coach' initiative and the possibility that the department lacks the in-house capabilities for training design.

Does the Department foresee meeting that timeline?

Will the potential barriers addressed in the Deloitte report prevent the Department from advancing supervisor training reform?

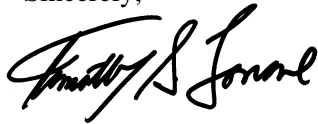
If the Department is unable to overcome these barriers, what third party will be engaged to advance supervisor training reform?

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We know funding more case managers was only the beginning. We are here to provide the legislative support necessary to achieve the structural and cultural change required of the Department to comply with standards, protect children and create a sustainable work environment for Family Case Managers.

It is Senator Breaux's and my belief that the scope and impact of this issue is simply too great to be disengaged from the Department's reform efforts. We look forward to meeting with you to discuss these prevailing concerns, and to hear your input on the paramount issue of protecting our most vulnerable.

Sincerely,



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