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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6200

CHRIS CAMPBELL, STAFF DIRECTOR
JOSHUA SHEINKMAN, DEMOCRATIC STAFF DIRECTOR

April 24, 2015

Dear Governor:

When children are removed from the custody of their parents due to abuse or neglect, as lawmakers, we have an obligation to ensure their safety and well-being. The reality is that there is no clear child welfare “system” but rather a complex structure consisting of overlapping Federal, State, County and Tribal laws and practices carried out by a mix of public and private entities. At times, this structure leads to finger pointing and confusion when it comes to the question of who is responsible when something goes wrong. In recent months, a particularly troubling series from BuzzFeed News reporting on the practices of a national private foster care provider network has raised the salience of this question once again.

The United States Senate Finance Committee has jurisdiction over Title IV of the Social Security Act (SSA), which includes the federal foster care and adoption programs. As Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Finance Committee, we are writing for background and information on your state’s policy and practices relative to privatized foster care.

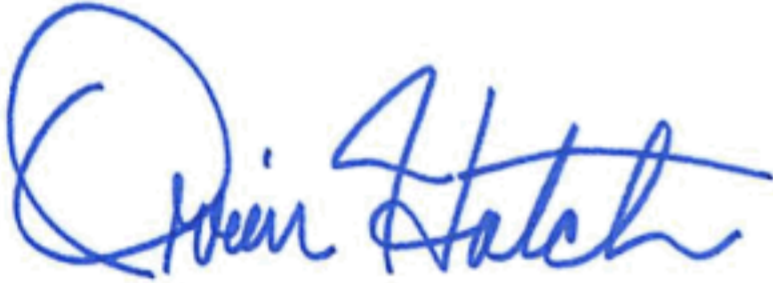
We are aware that states are increasingly contracting with private entities or organizations to administer some or all of their foster care programs. However, the extent and structure of these arrangements are less clear. To help us better understand these public-private partnerships, please provide the Senate Finance Committee with the following information no later than May 29, 2015.

- To the degree applicable, describe your state’s utilization of private entities to provide case management services (e.g., placement of children with particular foster care providers, ongoing casework and oversight of foster care placements).
- What proportion of the children in foster care in your state is placed by the public agency, not-for-profit providers, and for-profit providers?
- Please provide the number and names of private entities providing these core services, as well as information on whether each provider is a for-profit or not-for-profit entity.
- Does your state require that private foster care entities or organizations operating in your state be accredited? If so, by which organization and how often is this accreditation renewed?
- Describe in detail the process you use to select and contract with these private entities, as well as to review and renew such contracts.
- Describe in detail the process your state uses to inspect the safety of the foster care settings in which children are placed and the extent to which this process differs for public, not-for-profit, and for-public providers operating in your state.

- How many instances of abuse in a foster care placement have been substantiated in the last five years in your state? Of those substantiated, how many of these instances related to children placed by: not-for-profit providers, for-profit providers, and public providers?
- Describe in detail the actions taken when an abuse claim is substantiated while a child is in an out of home placement? Do these actions differ depending on whether the child was placed by the public agency, a not-for-profit provider, or a for-profit provider?

We thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. Please submit your response electronically to: [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Any additional inquiries may be directed to [REDACTED] Health and Human Resources Policy Advisor, Senate Finance Committee or [REDACTED], Senior Human Services Advisor, Senate Finance Committee at [REDACTED].

Sincerely,



Orrin G. Hatch
Chairman



Ron Wyden
Ranking Member